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**RESPECT: a personal development programme for
young people at risk of social exclusion**

Phase Two Evaluation Report

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January 2008

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- the RESPECT staff who have supplied us with information.

This is the second report of the RESPECT evaluation which has been commissioned by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and its partners as part of a project funded by the *Invest to Save* budget.

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Summary

Background

The RESPECT programme is governed by a partnership of organisations which work within the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service area of Cheshire, Halton and Warrington. The programme brings together a number of elements of the Fire and Rescue Service's earlier work in a concerted attempt to tackle wider challenges pertinent to the fire services whilst working in partnership with other agencies.

RESPECT, which has been funded for three years from the Government's *Invest to Save* initiative, is a targeted intervention for young people who are aged 11 to 16 years and who are disaffected and/or displaying anti-social behaviour. The programme aims to re-motivate young people who may be temporarily or permanently excluded from school, be in danger of exclusion, have a high level of unauthorised absences, be involved in anti-social behaviour and/or be known to the Youth Offending Teams.

The RESPECT programme comprises a number of different elements. These are Option One led by fire service personnel; Option Two led by the Youth Federation; detached youth work, *On the Streets*, led by Halton Youth Service; and a school holiday project. The initiative aims to offer different styles of delivery in the hope that one will be an appropriate and acceptable means of engaging each young person within the target group.

A three year evaluation was built into the RESPECT bid in order that the individual, community and societal benefits of the programme could be quantified and evidenced. This report is the second to be produced as part of the evaluation and is designed to provide a detailed account of the development and implementation of Option Two and *On the Streets* – these elements of the programme were less developed when the Phase One Evaluation Report was produced in June 2007. The report also describes recent developments within Option One and the RESPECT summer scheme.

Key findings

The key findings of this report, the second to be produced as part of the implementation evaluation, can be divided into issues relating to the strategic direction of the programme, to its operation and to the evaluation.

Strategic developments

- The Governance Board, which meets quarterly, has continued to be the formal decision making body for the RESPECT programme. Although the Board has a new chairperson as a result of the retirement of Cheshire's deputy chief fire officer, there have not been any other changes to the Board's membership or the programme's structures.
- The major strategic issue identified by the implementation evaluation related to the potential implications of the emergence of three distinct models of delivery for the programme. Also identified by the evaluation were the pattern of attendance at, and possible changes to, the membership of the Governance Board; the need for all partners to consider the strategic and the operational implications of requests made and programme developments; and policy issues raised as a result of closer interagency working, such as those relating to safeguarding children.

Operational developments

- Operational processes have continued to develop and all three of the RESPECT programme's modes of delivery (Option One, Option Two and *On the Streets*) are now fully operational. A summer activity also ran during July and August 2007.
- The implementation evaluation identified a number of issues which might have an impact upon the operation of the programme and which may affect the outcomes that can be achieved in the future. These are the extent to which further developments can be accommodated within the programme given the constraint of resources, equality and equity in the referral process, further consideration of how a positive medium and long term impact for each young person can be facilitated and further developments in partnership working at the operational level.

The evaluation

- The evaluators have continued to be involved in many aspects of the RESPECT programme and have found managers, staff and young people to be accessible and open in sharing their experiences. In addition to the implementation evaluation, the first impact report is to be produced in 2008.
- Although there are some gaps in the data collected by the programme, the situation has continued to improve. The major issue for the evaluation is that the development of three distinct models of operation will have an impact upon the scope of the evaluation.

This report covers the development and implementation of the RESPECT programme between April 2007 and September 2007 and so the findings are a snapshot of the situation at one point in time. As the programme and its systems and procedures continue to develop, some of the issues that have been raised in this report may have already been addressed. The Governance Board will be able to identify the outstanding issues and decide whether action is required.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The RESPECT programme

RESPECT is a personal development programme run by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service for disaffected young people aged 11 to 16, who are at risk of social exclusion. The aim of the programme, which is funded by the Government's *Invest to Save* initiative, is described in the following way:

RESPECT aims to transform the lives of young people who have dropped out or are at risk of being excluded from school by triggering changes of behaviour and improving their confidence and self-esteem. Ultimately we wish to develop young people into better citizens who will understand the word 'RESPECT'. (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, 2007).

The objectives of the programme include to contribute to a reduction in the number of young people who are permanently excluded or who have fixed term exclusions from school; to contribute to a reduction in unauthorised school absences; to reduce the number of small deliberate fires and hoax calls; and to reduce the number of young people not in employment, education or training.

The RESPECT programme is made up of a number of different elements. These are Option One and Option Two courses, a detached youth work project, *On the Streets*, and a school holiday project.

Option One is a Fire Service-led 11 week course which engages young people in a number of activities designed to build team work, confidence and self-esteem. Option Two is also an 11 week course involving a number of group and one-to-one activities designed to motivate and engage young people; this course is delivered by the Youth Federation and intended for young people who may require more intense and individualised support than can be provided by Option One. *On the Streets*, run in conjunction with Halton Youth Service, has been implemented within Halton wards and adopts a detached youth work approach to working with young people. The school holiday project was run by the Option One staff in July and August 2007.

1.2 The evaluation

A three year evaluation was built into the RESPECT bid in order that the individual, community and societal benefits of the programme could be quantified and evidenced. The Fire Service's requirements (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, 2007) for the evaluation included the following:

- a risk profile of young people at the first point of contact with the RESPECT programme with the purpose of analysing the most effective interventions, resulting in demonstrable risk reduction;
- the key contributors to attitudinal and behavioural change;
- regular analysis of the programme, including cost benefit analysis and effectiveness in achieving the programme objectives;
- whether the programme has any impact on the provision of services by the partner agencies and, if so, the social and economic benefits arising therefrom;
- whether the programme has had any impact on anti-social behaviour and, if so, the economic and social benefits arising therefrom.

The evaluation of the RESPECT programme by the Centre for Public Health Research (CPHR) has two strands, one focusing on implementation and one focusing on outcomes. The first report produced as part of the evaluation (Ward, Collier & Thurston, 2007) examined the early implementation of the RESPECT programme and was designed to provide timely information about the dynamics of the operation of the programme. The outcome evaluation strand is divided into three elements: outcomes for young people, outcomes for the community, and outcomes for society. The outcomes for young people have been defined in terms of qualitative and quantitative indicators, the latter involving a 'before and after' study design to capture change at the individual level. The outcomes for the community and society focus on the extent to which the benefits of the programme are 'felt' beyond the individuals targeted. A full description of the evaluation strategy can be found in the Phase One Evaluation Report (Ward, Collier & Thurston, 2007).

1.3 The content and structure of this report

This report is the second to be produced as part of the implementation evaluation. Chapter 2 of the report provides an account of developments on Option One since April 2007 and the RESPECT programme's summer scheme during July and August 2007.

Chapters 3 and 4 present a more detailed examination of the implementation of Option Two and *On the Streets* – these elements of the programme were less developed when the Phase One Evaluation Report was produced earlier in 2007. The final chapter of the report draws together the main findings as identified by the evaluation in order to highlight the implications for the strategic direction of the RESPECT programme, its operational development and the evaluation.

1.4 Methodology

The data presented within this report was generated from qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data were derived from structured and semi-structured interviews, including semi-structured interviews with 10 professionals at various levels within the partner organisations, including chief executives and operational staff. Structured interviews were conducted with 19 young people who attended the *On the Streets* project. Interviews were taped and transcribed then coded for thematic analysis. Observation sessions were also conducted on the Option One and Option Two courses and during a detached session with *On the Streets*.

Quantitative data from Option One and Option Two in the form of referral forms, attendance registers and Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires, were analysed using Microsoft Excel or SPSS. Activity information relating to the *On the Streets* project was supplied by Halton Youth Service.

Chapter 2

Developments in Option One and the RESPECT summer scheme

2.1 Introduction

Option One of the RESPECT programme comprises a one day per week course which is designed to last for 11 weeks. It runs three times per year during school term time and up to 12 young people can attend each course. A number of courses (ranging from three to six in the school year 2006-07) run at any one time in different areas of Cheshire and Warrington.

The aims and objectives of the RESPECT programme state that the Option One course aims to provide intensive, disciplined and practical experiences which are designed to encourage young people to take responsibility, think about the consequences of their actions, work in teams and constructively solve problems. The aim of the course is to offer opportunities for participation and achievement and in doing so, trigger attitudinal and behavioural change (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, 2006).

The activities included in the Option One course are outlined below:

- introduction and training agreement;
- team building;
- basic fire-fighter training 1;
- water awareness;
- outdoor activity 1;
- fire awareness and hoax calls;
- road traffic collisions;
- outdoor activity 2;
- live fire;
- basic fire fighter training 2;
- graduation.

The sessions are designed to take place at a variety of venues including local fire stations, fire headquarters and outdoor locations for rock climbing, canoeing, water awareness and team building.

Option One was the main focus of the first RESPECT implementation report (Ward, Collier & Thurston, 2007) and, whilst the 11 week course has remained relatively unchanged since then, there have been a number of developments during the last six months, largely in response to requests from referrers. A discussion of these developments is the focus of this chapter. The chapter also explores the RESPECT programme's summer scheme that ran in Halton during the school holiday in 2007.

2.2 Mini-RESPECT course

A major development within the RESPECT programme during May 2007 was the introduction of a mini-course which ran from a high school in Northwich. This course was devised after staff from the school contacted the RESPECT programme manager and requested an intervention for pupils who attended the school. This section will explore the development, implementation and structure of the mini-RESPECT course.

2.2.1 The needs of the high school

The high school is situated in an area of social deprivation, characterised by low incomes, poor health and low levels of skills (Audit Commission, 2007). Staff at the school identified the need to address two associated issues: these were anti-social behaviour and poor attendance amongst pupils within the school and the level of anti-social behaviour, arson and criminal activity within the wider community, some of which was attributed to the school's pupils.

Although the school had an established alternative education programme with which 'disaffected' pupils could engage, staff were keen to implement some form of uniformed service activity within this programme: they believed that this might improve pupils' confidence and reduce the barriers that often exist between this group of young people and uniformed personnel. A member of school staff also suggested that some young people engaged in criminal behaviour and associated with gangs because they enjoyed the level of risk involved. He hoped that by providing young people with the opportunity to undertake fire-related activities that involve a level of controlled risk, young people might not feel compelled to engage in criminal activity. In this way, both the school and the wider community would benefit.

2.2.2 Previous work with the Fire and Rescue Service

The Fire and Rescue Service's Youth Engagement Team and the school had some experience of working together before the RESPECT programme was established. At the request of the school, the Fire and Rescue Service had previously provided a brief intervention programme for a group of the school's pupils: this programme comprised three sessions, which included team building activities, a visit to the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters and hose running.

Staff from the school were pleased with the programme that had been provided and argued that it had a positive effect on those young people who participated. They were therefore keen for the Fire and Rescue Service to contribute to the current alternative curriculum programme.

2.2.3 Development of the mini-course

As with all of the schools in Cheshire and Warrington, this high school was able to refer pupils to the 11 week Option One course. The school considered this to be an appropriate avenue for two people who attended between January and April 2007. Both young people completed the course (one receiving the most improved student award) and school staff reported that their behaviour had improved as a result of their involvement.

Despite these positive outcomes, however, the view of the school was that the number of pupils who could benefit from the RESPECT programme could not be accommodated on the 11 week Option One course. The RESPECT programme manager also suggested that they did not have the capacity to run an 11 week course for a single school group at this time.

Thus, although individuals from the school had previously been referred to Option One, it did not meet the overall needs of the school and its pupils. But given the difficulties of some pupils, and the established relationship between the school and the Fire and Rescue Service, both agencies believed that a fire service-centred activity would be beneficial. The school specified that any activity should be exclusive to their school's pupils, it needed to focus on team building and confidence, and it had to fit within the school's existing timetables: in response to this, the RESPECT team agreed to run a shorter ('mini') Option One course.

2.2.4 Structure of the mini-course

Two of the RESPECT staff who facilitated the Option One courses were informed of the school's request for a shorter course by the RESPECT programme manager. He provided an outline of the school's requirements and the facilitators designed the mini-course with these in mind. They aimed to include the same activities as were included on the 11 week course but in less depth. The staff reported that the format of the Option One course meant that it was possible to devise the mini-course in a relatively short period of time.

To meet the criteria specified by the school, the Option One course was therefore scaled down to fit into six 2½ hour sessions, each was to take place in an afternoon. In addition to these shorter sessions, the school was keen to include a full day session so that the group could take part in an activity at Woodford Airfield. The sessions were designed to be school-based unless it was necessary to use fire service facilities: this was required for the road traffic collision and the activity at Woodford Airfield.

2.2.5 Staff

Two RESPECT Option One staff were responsible for organising and delivering each session, and facilitating the young people's learning. A teacher from the school's alternative curriculum team was also present to assist the RESPECT staff and provided additional support to the young people when necessary. If a young person was experiencing difficulties with a task or session, for example, the support worker was able to assist them on a one-to-one basis and limit the disturbance to the session and other group members. The RESPECT staff reported that the presence of this member of staff was both necessary and very positive: the only reservation they expressed was that they felt rather like outsiders in an established group and suggested that this may have been a factor that affected the development of their relationships with the young people.

2.2.6 The participants

There were 11 Year 10 males allocated to the mini RESPECT course in May 2007. These young people were an established group who had previously worked together on other alternative education programmes: they were also engaged in a community development programme at the time.

As this course was a pilot for the RESPECT programme, it was decided that the evaluation should focus on its development, structure and implementation, rather than look in detail at the characteristics of the young people who were allocated a place. If the mini-course is to become an additional element of the RESPECT programme, this information will be collected and analysed alongside an impact analysis.

2.2.7 Attendance and course completion

Only one of the 11 young people who began the mini-course did not complete it – he left the course after the first week. Of the remaining 10 pupils, three attended every session, four pupils missed one session, two missed two sessions and one missed three. Four of these absences were unauthorised. The support worker reported that this group's school attendance had improved during the time they were attending the RESPECT course, suggesting that this was because they were motivated and looked forward to the sessions.

2.2.8 Practical arrangements

The RESPECT staff stated that most aspects of the development and implementation of the mini-RESPECT course went well. They anticipated problems in transporting equipment and uniforms, but were able to overcome these by preparing equipment and loading their vehicle during the morning as the sessions took place in the afternoon. On the whole, the RESPECT staff suggested that they were able to adapt the course to the school environment where necessary – one example was the hose running activity where the absence of a water hydrant in the area that they were able to use at the high school meant that it was not possible for pupils to squirt water from the hoses. Despite these limitations, however, the staff suggested that all of the objectives for each session were met.

2.2.9 Implications of running RESPECT from a school

A fundamental difference between the 11 week Option One course and the mini-RESPECT course is that it is based and largely run in a different environment. In addition to the practical points discussed above, this presented three wider issues for the RESPECT staff.

Firstly, other pupils at the school proved to be a distraction on occasions and diverted the attention of some young people away from the facilitators and the activity they were

undertaking. During a hose-running activity, for example, students in the RESPECT group joined their friends at break time and failed to return afterwards, thus missing the rest of the session. At other times, participants got into conversation with students who were passing through the classrooms in which RESPECT activities were running. It is likely that distractions such as these will have an impact upon the way that RESPECT staff are able to engage with participants and on the extent to which the young people are able to focus on the activities and learn from the course.

The second issue for the RESPECT practitioners was that running the course from a school rather than a fire station meant that the young people had less opportunity to be exposed to a new and different environment. This was reported as a particular concern as the philosophy underlying the RESPECT programme places some emphasis on the benefits of doing this in a controlled way to develop young people's self-confidence and their ability to engage within different social situations and in new environments. Indeed, on visiting a fire station to undertake a road traffic collision session, the RESPECT staff suggested that members of the group were apprehensive and 'out of their comfort zone' and, as a result, reluctant to engage with the activity. The disposition of the participants during this particular session surprised staff as they had previously found that it was one of the more popular activities with Option One groups.

The location of the programme within the school also meant that there were fewer opportunities for interaction with fire service personnel, thus limiting the extent to which the programme was able to break down the stereotypes that young people were believed to hold about the uniformed services.

The staff suggested that a third implication of the RESPECT programme going into the school to deliver activities was that it affected the extent to which they were able to form relationships and build rapport with young people. The staff suggested that this was, in part, because they were seen as outsiders: they suggested that this was illustrated by the way that the young people turned to the support worker, rather than themselves, as the source of support if they had any difficulties during the sessions. A member of staff from the school, however, stated that in his opinion, the group had engaged well with the RESPECT practitioners and the relationship between them had developed in a positive way throughout the course.

2.2.10 Impact of the mini RESPECT course

Although there has not been a systematic evaluation of the impact of the mini-RESPECT course, the member of staff from the school who requested the provision suggested that there was a visible increase in the self-esteem of the participants who had attended the course and that their school attendance had also improved. A member of the RESPECT staff also said that the level of confidence of the young people appeared to increase as they got more involved in the course. As a result of its positive impact, the school were hopeful that another course would run in the future.

More detailed monitoring and evaluation of the mini-course will take place if the RESPECT programme continues to offer this option in the future. This will help to establish the extent to which ‘fitting in with what the school required’, particularly with a shorter duration and different location, has an impact on the outcomes of the mini-course for the young people involved.

2.3 Other changes to the Option One course

In addition to the implementation of the mini-RESPECT course, there were also a number of developments to the format of the 11 week Option One course: these were courses for pupils from one school, the opportunity for a peer mentor in one of the groups, more systematic contact with pupils before they started the course and a change in the way that outdoor pursuits was provided. These are explored in the section below.

2.3.1 Single school groups

The majority of the RESPECT courses have comprised young people referred from a number of different sources (schools, study centres, the education support team, youth offending team and so on). The one exception to this, prior to May 2007, was the group of boys from a special school who attended the course that started in January 2007: the school expressed the view that the needs of these boys meant that a separate RESPECT course would need to be provided if they were to participate.

Leading up to the May 2007 courses, however, a mainstream school requested that all of the places on an 11 week course were made available to them: this was repeated for one of the September 2007 courses. On each occasion, 12 places were allocated to young people from a single school.

In the case of the May 2007 course, the decision to allocate all of the places on one course to young people from a single school was taken because staff from the school reported a high number of fixed term exclusions. The Fire Service identified that there had been a high incidence of small deliberate fires in the area around the second school.

The allocation of all of the places on an 11 week course to one school raises an important issue about equality and equity in the referral process. If up to a quarter of the available places in the 11 week course (as happened in May 2007) are allocated to one school, schools or other agencies working with young people who may have higher priority needs will not have the opportunity to attend the RESPECT programme at this time. At the same time as these courses are running with 12 pupils from one school, other referrers are being asked to prioritise the two or three young people who they think would get most out of attending the programme.

There are, however, a number of potential benefits in running single school groups for both the RESPECT programme and the young people. Although attending a course only with pupils from their own school will limit the opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills with a group of people who are unfamiliar to them, it may mean that they feel more secure with people they know and so find it easier to get involved in the activities, particularly in the early stages.

If all of the participants come from one establishment, it is easier for the school to provide a worker to support the young people on the course. This level of contact between a member of staff from the school and the young people whilst they are on the course can also assist in reinforcing the positive aspects of the course and the achievements of the young people when they are back in the school environment. The level of attendance and punctuality of participants has also been assisted in the single school groups as the support workers have been able to use school mini-buses to transport the young people to the appropriate venue each week.

For the single school group that ran from May 2007, the RESPECT staff decided, with the school, to organise the end of course graduation in a different way. Instead of holding the ceremony at a fire station, the graduation took place at the young people's school. As with the other Option One groups, the young people were encouraged to invite a small number of teachers, family members and friends; in addition, around 200 fellow pupils attended the graduation. This format was adopted as it was anticipated

that the young people and the school would take more ownership of their achievements and the graduation proceedings. The fact that all group members attended the same school made it logistically possible.

In this particular instance, however, the graduation day did not run as smoothly as the other ceremonies that had taken place at the fire stations. The difficulties related to the behaviour of the participants. The RESPECT staff had been impressed with the progressive improvements in the behaviour of the young people throughout the programme and had found that they engaged well with all of the activities but on the day of the graduation, the poor behaviour of the group was an issue. Their lack of co-operation and bad language both surprised and disappointed the RESPECT staff and made it difficult for them to organise the day. Staff at the school and the RESPECT facilitators suggested that this change in behaviour could have been, in part, a result of them feeling anxious about the event, and also because they may have felt compelled to behave in a particular fashion in front of their peers. The RESPECT staff said that they had learnt from this experience and, given the positive aspect of the wider school involvement, would hold a graduation ceremony at a school again. They would, however, prepare the young people for the day in a different way so that they were better able to handle the experience.

Despite these difficulties, staff from the RESPECT team believed that there were benefits to be derived from single school groups and the RESPECT team have suggested that single school groups may take place in the future if the school can demonstrate the need and the programme has the capacity to respond. If resources permit, the preference of RESPECT is to provide an 11 week single school course run from a fire station rather than a shorter school-based mini-RESPECT course.

2.3.2 Peer mentor role

The Fire and Rescue Service created a peer mentoring role for a student during the May 2007 Option One course. This came about after a member of staff from the Youth Offending Team (YOT), who originally referred the student to the January 2007 course, requested some form of ongoing intervention. The YOT worker suggested that the attitude and behaviour of the young person had improved whilst he was on the course and they feared that once he had completed it and lost contact with the RESPECT programme, he might regress and re-offend. The RESPECT staff agreed that the

young person had engaged well with the programme and looked for a way that they could reinforce the learning from Option One.

The peer mentoring role was thus created for this young person. RESPECT staff and the YOT officer together drew up two contracts for the young person to sign – one referred to their expectations around his offending behaviour and the other to his role as a peer mentor on the Option One course. The peer mentor role was thus projected as an incentive for continued law-abiding behaviour, the intention being that the mentor would have access to structured personal development post-Option One and the current group members would benefit from his experience.

The mentoring role raised a number of issues for the RESPECT programme in relation to the overall philosophy of the programme and the processes involved in recruiting a peer mentor. The first point is that one of the fundamental aims of the programme is to contribute to the reintegration of young people into the education system rather than to provide an ongoing intervention. It is therefore very important that the reasons for offering a peer mentoring role to a young person, rather than facilitating their return to school, are carefully considered.

The second learning point for the RESPECT programme relates to the process of offering a peer mentor role to a young person. In this instance, the programme responded quickly to the request from a referrer and, although contracts were drawn up, this was with the view to taking on the particular young person in this role. The RESPECT programme manager has suggested that if peer mentors were to be used in the future, there would be a selection process whereby candidates would be chosen if it was apparent that they had a clear understanding of the role and it was the right thing for them to do at that time. In the case of the May 2007 course, it became apparent to the RESPECT staff that the peer mentor did not take his role seriously and that he *'wanted to do the course again'*: instead of being of some assistance, his behaviour presented difficulties for the RESPECT staff.

2.3.3 Pre-course contact

Referrals to the 11 week Option One course have come from a range of agencies including schools, education support teams, youth offending teams and Connexions. Prior to the May 2007 courses, any contact between RESPECT and the young people who had been referred was undertaken by the programme's School Liaison Officer.

She aimed to meet with each young person before the start of the course to give them more information about the activities they would be doing and to answer any questions they may have.

The RESPECT programme considered this pre-course contact to be essential and so in May 2007, enhanced this element of the programme by arranging meetings, wherever possible, between the course facilitators and the young people the week before the course started. It was hoped that these meetings would mean that the first week of the course was a less daunting experience and, consequently, there would be fewer young people who did not start the course and those who did attend would feel at ease and become involved at an earlier stage. In terms of non-starters, the figures show that there was a reduction from 10% (seven people) of allocations in January 2007 to 4% (two people) in May 2007. Anecdotal evidence from one of the September 2007 courses suggests that a number of young people who could not be visited before the course, because of the timescales involved, arrived on the first day with little knowledge and unclear expectations about RESPECT: four girls on this course chose not to continue with the course but pursue another alternative curriculum activity.

The number of places on Option One courses and the time that is available to the young people on the course are both limited. The pre-course contact with the young people is important so that they have enough information to make an informed decision about their participation and come to the first day knowing what to expect and ready to learn. The pre-course contact provides an opportunity for the young person to withdraw if they do not feel it is the right option for them and their place could be allocated to another pupil.

2.3.4 Outdoor pursuit activities

Whilst most of the activities on the Option One course have remained the same, the way in which outdoor pursuits activities are delivered changed for the May 2007 courses. Previously, this day had taken place at an independent activity centre and activities such as climbing, zip lining and confidence building games had been run primarily by the centre's own staff (on occasions, RESPECT staff had to join in as there was an insufficient number of instructors available).

The RESPECT programme took the decision during the January 2007 courses that the centre was not providing value for money on this day and an alternative was available

to them: they decided that they could provide it more economically and more appropriately in-house with the Fire and Rescue Service's own instructor who worked within the Youth Engagement Team.

The outdoor pursuits activities were viewed as an important element of the programme as they require group members to follow instructions closely and work as a cohesive team. Also important is the fact that for many of the young people, these activities are new and challenging and their achievements are seen as important in building their confidence.

The outdoor pursuit's activities in the May 2007 courses were therefore delivered by the Service's own instructor, supported by the RESPECT staff. Each group travelled by mini-bus to an area on the eastern edge of Cheshire where they undertook climbing and abseiling activities. In the eventuality of adverse weather conditions, it was suggested that arrangements would be made to deliver adventure activities within an indoor facility.

This new delivery format of outdoor activities was considered to be generally successful and more financially viable. There have, however, been some difficulties with the distance that must be travelled to reach the venue as it is on the eastern edge of the county. It has been suggested by RESPECT staff that the time taken to travel to and from the rock face exceeds that which is actually spent doing the activity for some groups and this has resulted in a level of frustration and poor behaviour amongst the young people. Consequently, several possible venues that are closer to a number of the fire stations where Option One is based are currently under consideration.

2.4 The RESPECT summer scheme

The Fire and Rescue Service staff within the RESPECT programme delivered a summer scheme during the school holidays in July and August 2007. Several options for the summer scheme were considered earlier in the year but it was decided that the RESPECT programme should contribute to Cheshire Fire and Rescue services broader Halton Summer Arson Reduction Campaign. In 2006, Fire Service statistics showed that there had been a 300% rise in small deliberate fires in Halton during the month of July (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, 2007).

As one element of a broader Fire Service strategy in the area, the RESPECT team were to staff the outreach vehicle in one of the 'hot spot' areas, Runcorn Hill. RESPECT staff visited the area before the summer holidays to speak to rangers and gather information about the area and during the summer; the plan was for three members of the RESPECT team to be based there between 5pm and 8pm, three times a week.

After one week at Runcorn Hill, however, during which they did not see any young people, the RESPECT team made the decision to relocate to the car park adjoining a youth centre in a nearby residential area. Here they made contact with approximately 28 young people. Three quarters of these people were male and the average age of the group was just over 14 years old. The young people were offered the opportunity to take part in a number of activities such as watching TV and videos and playing computer games, as well as talking with the RESPECT staff.

There were some initial problems with young people who had been drinking and who had behaved aggressively towards the RESPECT team but relationships quickly developed and a contract was devised by the staff and the young people. This outlined what was expected from the young people in terms of their behaviour and stated that they would not be able to participate in activities if they arrived under the influence of alcohol.

It is difficult to judge the success of the RESPECT summer scheme, both because it was part of a much bigger programme, and the fact that there was a lot of rain during the summer. In terms of their contact with young people, the RESPECT programme manager suggested that the number who came to the outreach vehicle may have been lower than expected because there were other activities, such as sports sessions and a theatre workshop, in the area at the same time. Fire Service figures show that the incidence of small deliberate fires reduced substantially for the same period from the previous year but the extent to which it was a result of the campaign, the weather, a combination of both or the result of other factors is open to question.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the main developments in the Option One courses and the summer scheme since April 2007. It is clear that the RESPECT programme has responded to requests from other agencies and the agenda of the Fire Service in

making these changes and that they are continuing to do so – under consideration at the present time are accreditation for the Option One course, further exploration of local activities that young people can pursue after the course and a plan to expand staff numbers so that a greater number of courses can be provided. The implications of all of these developments at a strategic level and operational level and for the evaluation are discussed in the final chapter of this report. Chapter 3 moves on to discuss developments in the implementation of Option Two of the programme.

Chapter 3

The implementation of Option Two

3.1 Introduction

Option Two of the RESPECT programme is run by the Youth Federation and offers an alternative to the Option One course. It is a one day per week course which is designed to last for 12 weeks. A number of courses (for example, three from May to July 2007) can run at any one time in different areas of Cheshire and Warrington and up to 14 young people can attend each course.

Option Two provides more individualised support to young people for whom, at that point in time, the more structured and disciplined format of Option One may not be appropriate. Youth Federation staff argue that a defining characteristic of Option Two is that it provides a relaxed and flexible environment in which young people can receive specialist youth work interventions. The Youth Federation staff have always been keen that Option Two was not seen as a course for young people who had 'failed' to engage with Option One but as a positive alternative for young people who were not ready for this course or who had needs that could be better addressed in a different way.

Option Two has several objectives, centred on developing young people's citizenship, improving their social and interpersonal skills, and assisting their reintegration at school. The Youth Federation suggests that it is important to use group and one-to-one sessions in the delivery of Option Two: in group work they can encourage the young people to develop team working and interpersonal skills whilst the one-to-one support provides an opportunity for each participant to focus on their own particular issues.

Examples of the topics included in the Option Two course from May 2007 are outlined below:

- team building;
- volunteering and leadership;
- personal development and life skills (through arts sessions);
- healthy lifestyles;
- aggressive behaviour management;
- fire service activity;
- young people and gambling;
- barge training;

-
- celebration event.

Although Option Two was one of the original elements of the RESPECT programme, it took longer to become established and so the first implementation report produced by the evaluation team (Ward, Collier & Thurston, 2007) provided only a brief overview of the Option. Option Two is therefore discussed in greater detail in this report. This chapter presents an overview of this element of the RESPECT programme, its referral and operational procedures, and a description of the young people who were referred to Option Two in May 2007.

3.2 The format of Option Two

The defining features of Option Two are evident from the description of the format of the 12 week course and the support available from the Youth Federation when it has come to an end, both of which are outlined below.

3.2.1 The 12 week course

One-to-one sessions start with an initial assessment which is completed with each participant at the start of the 12 week course. As part of this assessment (contained in Appendix 1), needs are identified and targets are set. Seven other one-to-one sessions take place throughout the course. Individuals leave the group activity and meet with the lead youth worker: these sessions allow the youth worker to monitor the progress of the individual, and provide the young person with an opportunity to talk about any issues they may be experiencing.

The programme of group activities for each course is devised with the particular young people in mind. The plan, however, is fluid and, if deemed necessary by the lead youth worker, activities can be changed, brought forward and/or set back within the programme. Changes may occur due to adverse weather conditions, or if the group is not considered to be ready to deal with potentially sensitive issues such as alcohol and drug use. Conversely, if other issues are expressed by group members, alternative activities can be introduced to the programme.

Although not all of the Option Two sessions are classroom-based, the youth workers stated that they make a concerted effort to link the skills young people learn during any

Option Two activity to other contexts, so that they can apply these skills in a practical way once they return to school.

In addition to the 12 week course, the Youth Federation was able to provide a shorter version during the summer of 2007 when they were approached by the Youth Offending Team (YOT). The YOT was concerned about a lack of summer provision for 10 'high risk, high priority' young offenders and were keen for the Youth Federation to run a summer RESPECT course specifically for this group in order to divert them from anti-social behaviour and/or criminal activity over the summer holidays.

3.2.2 Contact with referrers and parents

One aim of the Option Two youth workers is to provide referrers with regular written and verbal updates concerning the young people's progress whilst attending Option Two, in order to generate a dialogue whereby both parties can contribute towards the young person's development. The objective of this contact is to enable the referrer to monitor young people's progress and to provide a forum to discuss the need for any continued intervention and support. Thus, both the Youth Federation and referrers can monitor young people's progress and discuss possible strategies for their support and sustained development once they have completed Option Two.

One of the youth workers, however, stated that in some cases, particularly when referrers are school teachers, it had been difficult to make contact with them to provide updates, thus limiting the extent to which a young person's needs could be addressed and interventions set in place by Option Two of the RESPECT programme.

Youth workers have also provided weekly updates and feedback to each young person's parent(s). This is done via the telephone during the evening of the Option Two sessions; if a family did not have access to a telephone, the youth workers have endeavoured to provide feedback to parents when they took young people home at the end of the day. Youth workers reported that they try to maintain regular contact with parents, believing it to be beneficial to young people for staff to develop positive relationships with them.

The youth workers suggested that the young people responded positively to them contacting their parents because they see this as the youth worker taking an active interest in their progress and well-being. The Youth Federation's Option Two

programme manager suggested that, as far as is possible, parents were informed of their child's achievements, believing that this inspired praise which further motivated participants. Furthermore, this contact provides an opportunity for youth workers to address with parents any difficulties that have been identified during the course. By doing so, youth workers hope that parents will raise any issues with their child which may help to alleviate problems on the course.

3.2.3 Distance contact with young people

The young people who attend the Option Two course are provided with access to a youth worker, by telephone, text message and email or through a meeting, both whilst they are attending the programme and once they have completed it. The Youth Federation offers this service to every young person who has attended one of its programmes, arguing that some ongoing guidance and support is frequently required following a brief intervention. The Youth Federation reported that this element of the programme has been well received and used by young people.

In addition to these forms of contact, the Youth Federation is considering the possibility of implementing a 'drop-in system' which would give young people access to a youth worker whilst they are at school. The system would be implemented in conjunction with referring schools, their role being to facilitate a meeting between the young person and a youth worker who would then come to the school.

3.2.4 Post course activities

The Youth Federation explained that it was committed to supporting the continued development of young people who have attended one of its courses and, wherever possible, would facilitate contact with, or a referral to, other programmes or activities on completion of Option Two. This may be another Youth Federation scheme or externally run programmes such as The Duke of Edinburgh Award or The Prince's Trust. At the end of the course, for example, three young people from the May 2007 Option Two course were referred to Education to Employment (run by the Youth Federation), the Scouts and one young person to a development programme in Gambia.

3.3 Option Two staffing

The Youth Federation employs a programme manager for Option Two and this member of staff, another youth worker and three support staff deliver the course. Each

Option Two session is supervised by a youth worker, who takes overall responsibility for the group, and a support worker who provides support to the youth worker and young people. The Youth Federation is keen that Option Two is seen as being underpinned by a youth work philosophy. All Youth Federation staff have specialised training in the developmental psychology of young people and they argue that they have experience in the use of delivery methods that engage disaffected young people.

The Youth Federation also has a number of staff who have specialised skills in activities such as art and dance who can be utilised to deliver specific sessions. In addition, external contractors can be employed when necessary to lead on activities such as sports or outdoor pursuits. It is also proposed that future Option Two courses will visit the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters to participate in fire service activities, sessions that would be led by fire fighters.

The Youth Federation reported that its work rotas allow staff to be utilised and deployed in a flexible manner. When necessary, for example, youth workers and support workers can be relocated to run Option Two courses in different geographical areas when additional staff are needed. This was the case during the courses that started in May 2007 as a result of the large numbers of referrals that were received. The Youth Federation managers also suggested that it was the flexibility of their rotas which enabled Option Two to accommodate a request for a six week course specifically for the YOT during the summer of 2007.

3.4 Referral mechanisms and procedures

The referral mechanisms and procedures for Option Two have developed over the past six months. Concerns were raised by the Youth Federation's Chief Executive at the RESPECT Governance Board regarding the low numbers of referrals received during the first six months of the programme that resulted in the Youth Federation being unable to undertake the work for which they were being funded.

3.4.1 Referral routes

There was some initial confusion with regard to how referrals are made to Option Two and how young people move between Option One and Option Two. Managers from both the Fire Service and the Youth Federation believe that this was due, in part, to an insufficient link being made between Option One and Two within the publicity material.

There also appears to have been a lack of discussion between the managers of the different elements about referral procedures and the process of moving young people between the two options, something that has been rectified with the publication of a new leaflet, in September 2007, that provides details about both Option One and Option Two. The new leaflet is contained in Appendix 2.

There have thus been a number of changes to the referral pathway for the Option Two course since its inception. The initial intention of Option Two was that it was for those young people who had disengaged with, been dismissed from or were deemed not to be ready to start Option One at that time. During the first months of the RESPECT programme, however, few referrals were made from Option One to Option Two in accordance with these criteria.

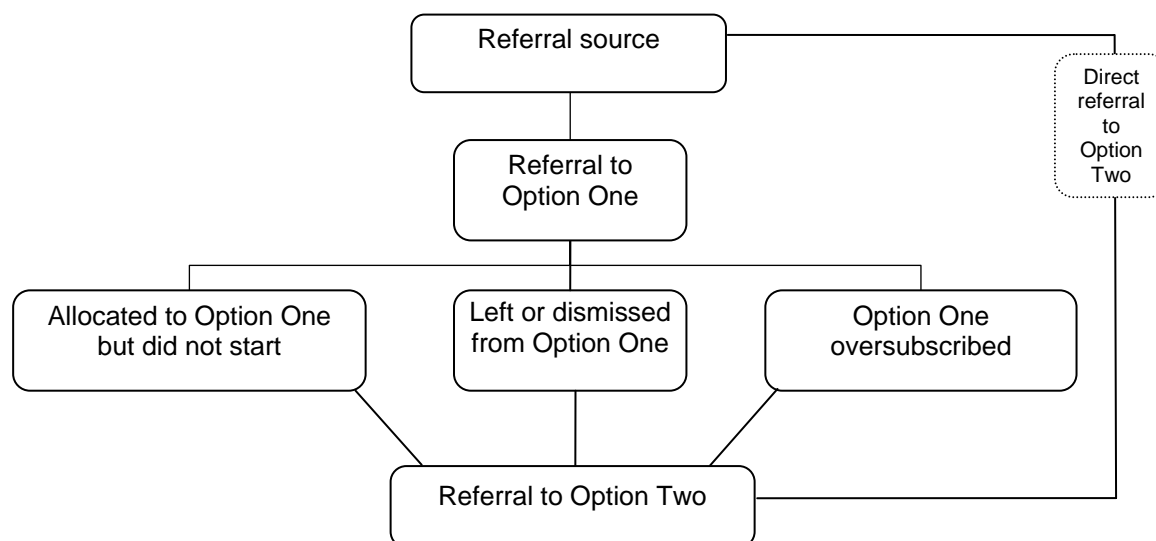
In response to the limited number of referrals during the first four months of 2007, the Youth Federation went directly to referrers to recruit young people to the May 2007 Option Two courses and the RESPECT School Liaison Officer also referred young people who could not be offered a place on Option One because it was over-subscribed – this raises the question of whether the RESPECT programme was always offering the most appropriate service to each young person or it is simply (and maybe equally important) a timely response to a request from the referrer.

The referral process adopted resulted in 42 young people being allocated places on Option Two in May 2007 but they did not necessarily meet the original referral criteria for the course. In fact, only five of those referred and allocated to the May 2007 courses had been referred and allocated to Option One: two of these young people did not start and three left Option One part way through the course.

The evaluation identified this as an issue, both in relation to the criteria that had been set for Option Two and the lack of clarity for referrers. As a consequence of these discussions, it was agreed that all referrals would go through the School Liaison Officer to ensure that the criteria were met: recent conversations, however, suggest that the Youth Federation will be able to accept referrals direct from schools and other sources. If there is not to be a central point for referrals within the RESPECT programme, the onus is on the referrers to ensure that each young person is referred to the element that is most suitable for them at that point in time. It is essential that the information they have about the programme allows them to make this informed decision. Both

Youth Federation and Fire Service staff believe that the link between the two options is now clearer within written promotional material and linked websites. The referral routes that have been taken to Option Two are illustrated in Figure 3.4.1.1 below.

Figure 3.4.1.1 Referral routes to Option Two



3.4.2 The referral form

Referrals to Option Two are made through the generic RESPECT referral form. In brief, the referral form provides personal details, details concerning a young person's issues and needs, as well as highlighting any anti-social and/or criminal activity they are known to have engaged in. The referral form is contained in Appendix 3.

3.5 Referrals to Option Two

The following information refers to the referrals that were made to the Option Two course during the spring and early summer of 2007. Three Option Two courses began in May 2007 and one course, the YOT course, in July 2007.

3.5.1 Young people referred to Option Two

A total of 72 young people were referred to Option Two for courses that were planned to start from May/July 2007. This was a higher number of referrals than was anticipated by Youth Federation staff and was largely a result of young people being referred because Option One was oversubscribed. The Youth Federation was unable to

allocate places to 30 of the young people referred via Option One for a number of reasons:

- five young people were deemed unsuitable because they had already left school;
- the Youth Federation was unable to make contact with six young people;
- 12 young people could not be allocated a place due to oversubscription on Option Two;
- a further seven referrals were not allocated a place but the reason for this was unclear.

In addition to the referrals that came via RESPECT Option One and individual referrals made directly to Option Two staff, 10 young people were referred specifically to the YOT course.

Table 3.5.1.1 shows that the 42 young people who were allocated a place on Option Two were divided into four groups:

Table 3.5.1.1 Young people referred and allocated to Option Two in May/July 2007

| Option Two group | Number of young people |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Crewe and Vale Royal | 8 |
| Ellesmere Port and Chester | 14 |
| Ellesmere Port YOT (July 2007) | 10 |
| Warrington | 10 |
| Total | 42 |

3.5.2 A profile of young people allocated a place on Option Two

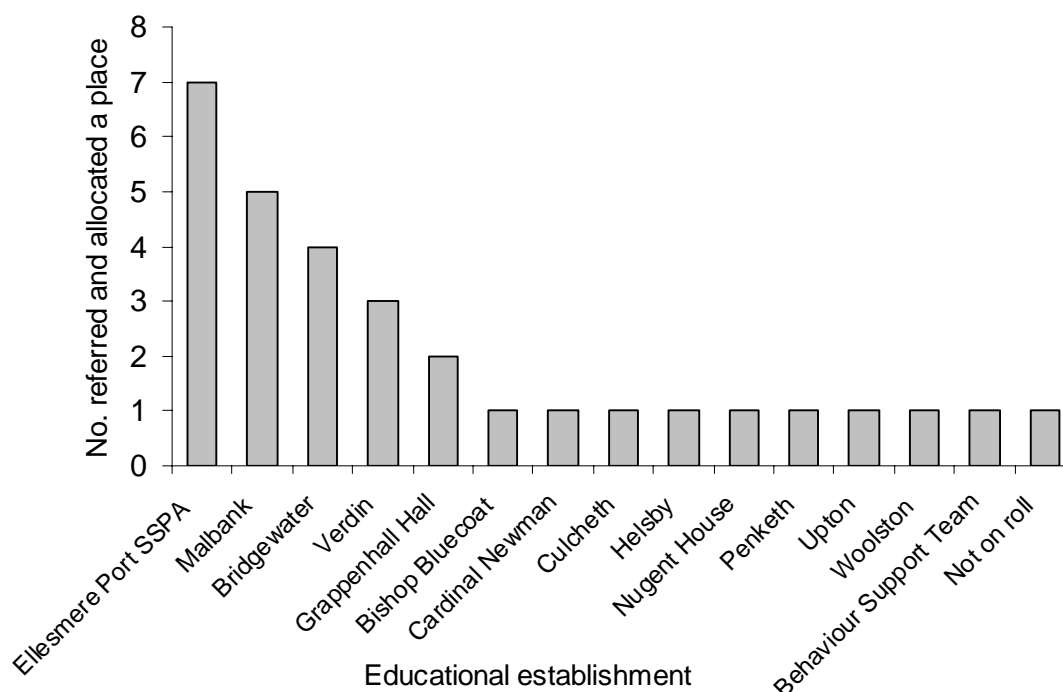
Although 42 young people were allocated a place on the Option Two courses between May and July 2007, RESPECT referral forms were not completed for 19 people. Where possible, information has been collected from other sources, such as the attendance registers, but much of the following analysis is based on the 23 young people for whom referral forms were available (although 13 of these forms were missing a variety of

information including dates of birth, full address, sex, and data referring to either needs assessment and/or anti-social and criminal activity).

The referral data allow a profile of the young people being referred and allocated to Option Two to be developed. Of the 42 young people referred and allocated, 35 were male and seven female, a ratio of 5:1. The age of these young people ranged from 13 to 15 years with a mean age of 14 years: 75% (21) were aged between 14 and 15 years (data was missing for 14 individuals).

Young people referred to Option Two were educated at 14 different schools, alternative education centres and by the behaviour support team. The referral forms show that one pupil was permanently excluded. Whilst 10 young people were the only pupils from their particular school, one school had seven attendees and four more schools had between two and five places allocated. Figure 3.5.2.1 illustrates the educational establishment that young people were attending at the time of being referred to the May/July cohort.

Figure 3.5.2.1 Educational establishment attended



The RESPECT referral form contains a needs assessment that identifies the areas in which referrers think that a young person has problems and would benefit from

support. By analysing the data provided by the needs assessment it is possible to build a profile of young people's needs.

Of those young people for whom data was provided relating to disabilities or special needs, 10 were identified as having a specific disability or special need (12 were recorded as having no disability or special needs and data was missing for 20 people). Table 3.5.2.1 shows the number of young people with identified disabilities: in many cases, referrers indicated that the young person's disability or special need contributed to their poor behaviour.

Table 3.5.2.1 Disability and/or special needs recorded

| Needs assessment category | Number of young people |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Emotional and behavioural difficulties | 5 |
| Learning disability | 3 |
| Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder | 1 |
| Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties | 1 |

The referral form also asks referrers to rate the needs of each young person in relation to six categories: these are basic skills, basic social skills, self-esteem, behaviour management, and the need for a secure, supportive environment, and academic curriculum. Table 3.5.2.2 indicates the number of young people who referrers identified as being in either the high or highest priority band within these categories and the percentage as a total of the young people for whom this information was available. Each young person can be classed as high or highest priority for more than one of the areas of need highlighted.

The most frequently identified high priority need was for a secure and supportive environment, followed by the need to improve their level of self-esteem and behaviour management. Child protection issues were also identified for three young people, (two males aged 13 and 15 and a female aged 13).

Table 3.5.2.2 High priority areas of need

| Category of need | Number of young people | % |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----|
| Secure and supportive environment | 18 | 78 |
| Improve self-esteem | 16 | 70 |
| Improve behaviour management | 15 | 65 |
| Basic social skills | 12 | 52 |
| Academic curriculum | 10 | 43 |
| Basic skills | 5 | 21 |

The RESPECT referral form asks about any offending or anti-social behaviour in which a young person is known to have engaged. Information relating to known offending and anti-social behaviour is presented in Table 3.5.2.3.

Table 3.5.2.3 Offending and anti-social behaviour recorded

| Offending categories | Number of young people | % |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----|
| Verbal violence | 15 | 65 |
| Offending behaviour | 10 | 43 |
| Anti-social behaviour | 10 | 43 |
| Physical violence | 9 | 39 |
| Fire setting | 7 | 30 |
| Hoax calls | 5 | 22 |
| Court convictions | 3 | 13 |
| Dangerous driving | 3 | 13 |
| Other | 3 | 13 |

The referral data indicate that there is a level of diversity in the offending and anti-social behaviour of young people allocated to the Option Two courses with six individuals for whom information was available having several offending behaviours recorded whilst four had no known offending or anti-social behaviours. Table 3.5.2.3 shows that verbal violence was most frequently mentioned and 43% had engaged in offending and/or anti-social behaviour; dangerous driving and hoax calls were less common offences. This profile is similar to the information about the participants on the early Option One courses (Ward, Collier & Thurston, 2007).

3.5.3 Late starters

In an attempt to be flexible and accommodate young people whenever possible, the Youth Federation will continue to allocate young people to Option Two groups after the course has begun. This was the case in the May/July 2007 courses when 10 people joined between Week 3 and Week 8. Youth Federation staff reported that they were able to integrate late arrivals successfully into the established groups during the May 2007 course, as they were frequently known to other participants as they attended the same school. The youth workers perceived that existing members of the group had accepted the late arrivals, who, in turn, quickly became engaged in the activities.

Table 3.5.3.1 provides further information relating to the young people who were allocated to the Option Two courses after they had started.

Table 3.5.3.1 Late allocations to Option Two courses

| Week of allocation | Contact with Option One | Option Two course |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 | Option One non-starter | Warrington |
| 3 | None - oversubscribed | Ellesmere Port and Chester |
| 3 | None - oversubscribed | Ellesmere Port YOT group |
| 5 | Option One leaver | Warrington |
| 7 | None - oversubscribed | Ellesmere Port and Chester |
| 7 | None - oversubscribed | Ellesmere Port and Chester |
| 8 | None - oversubscribed | Crewe |
| 8 | None - oversubscribed | Crewe |
| 8 | None - oversubscribed | Crewe |
| 8 | None - oversubscribed | Ellesmere Port and Chester |

The table shows that there were late allocations to all of the groups and only two of the participants had been previously allocated a place on Option One. However, it is unclear as to why the young people who were unable to join Option One because it was oversubscribed were such late starters on Option Two as the courses both began in May 2007.

As it is not possible to repeat sessions to accommodate late starters, one-to-one sessions are arranged with each young person to allow youth workers to talk about the previous sessions: if a young person has a specific interest in one of the topics that has

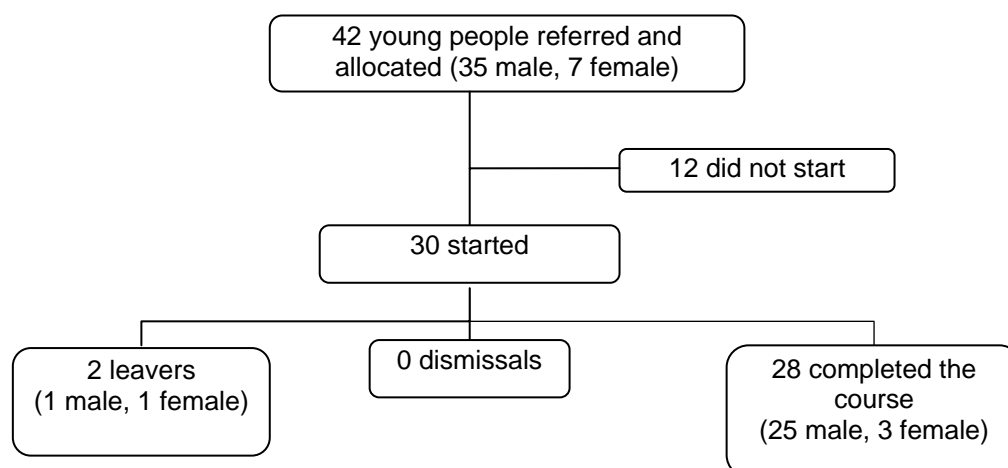
already been covered, a one-to-one session can be used to address this. It is questionable, however, whether a young person joining in the eighth week of a 12 week course has enough time to sufficiently cover the proportion of the course that s/he has missed.

The Youth Federation does not currently have a cut-off point at which time it is deemed to be too late to accept new group members, although the impact of the practice of accepting late starters is as yet unknown. It may affect the extent to which the course can address a young person's needs and it may also affect the dynamics of the group, particularly if the late starter does not know the other participants.

3.5.4 Attendance and course completion

Of the 42 young people who were allocated a place on the RESPECT Option Two courses from May to July 2007, 12 did not start their course. Of the 30 who did start, two did not complete the course, a drop out rate of 7%. This information is illustrated in Figure 3.5.4.1.

Figure 3.5.4.1 Pathway for people referred and allocated to May 2007 courses



Attendance registers for the Option Two courses from May/July 2007 show that for the 30 people who attended at least one session, there were 14 days of absence, all of which were authorised absences. The lack of late arrivals and unauthorised absences may, in part, be attributable to the fact that the young people are transported to Option

Two sessions by Youth Federation staff. Youth workers collected participants from school or called at the student's home if they were not at school. Further analysis of the attendance registers indicates that 28 (93%) of those who started Option Two completed their course. Of the 28 participants who were still attending by the penultimate week, 22 had full attendance.

As Figure 3.5.4.1 above illustrates, 12 young people did not start Option Two and two left their course. Table 3.5.4.1 shows the distribution of non-starters and leavers between the Option Two groups.

Table 3.5.4.1 Non-starters and leavers from May 2007 courses

| Course | Non-starters | Leavers |
|----------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Crewe and Vale Royal | 1 | 0 |
| Ellesmere Port and Chester | 1 | 2 |
| Ellesmere Port YOT | 7 | 0 |
| Warrington | 3 | 0 |
| Total | 12 | 2 |

Table 3.5.4.1 indicates that five of the non-starters were allocated to the standard Option Two courses and seven were allocated to the YOT group. The Youth Federation was particularly disappointed with the number of young people who did not start the YOT group: the organisation had committed resources to this activity and only three people attended. Attempts were made to contact the non-starters but to no avail.

Table 3.5.4.1 also shows that both leavers attended the Ellesmere Port and Chester group. One of these young people left the course at Week 7 due to illness and the other left after Week 3 as he received a custodial sentence. Both of these participants had full attendance until their departure.

3.5.5 Accredited outcomes from Option Two

All young people who attend Option Two have the opportunity to achieve an accredited outcome in the form of an Award Scheme Development and Accredited Network (ASDAN) qualification, a Youth Challenge award or a Youth Achievement award. To achieve an ASDAN award, young people must complete 15 hours of work on four

'challenges' (modules) and produce a portfolio of work. The Option Two programme manager devises four challenges that relate to activities completed during the course. The May 2007 cohort, for example, completed challenges in relation to aggressive behaviour, art/crafts and personal development, team building, and gambling. Although the young people who are late starters may not be able to complete the full ASDAN award, they have the opportunity to undertake individual challenges and achieve a Youth Challenge or Youth Achievement award. To date, 19 (63%) young people who attended Option Two have received an ASDAN award and seven (23%) young people have received a Youth Challenge Award.

3.6 The impact of the course

There has not yet been any structured evaluation of the impact of the Option Two courses upon the young people who have attended. The qualitative evaluation will commence in December 2007 when focus groups will be conducted with the September 2007 cohort and follow-up interviews will then take place three months later with a sample of these young people. Pre-course (spring term) and post-course (autumn term) school attendance and exclusion information for the May/July 2007 cohort will be available in 2008.

In addition to this impact information, the evaluators introduced the pre-course and post-course Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire to measure the degree of change for the participants during the programme (see Ward, Collier & Thurston, 2007).

Twenty-one young people completed a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire when they joined and at the end of the Option Two course. The pre-intervention questionnaire showed that seven people (33%) fell into each of the pre-set bands (normal, borderline and abnormal).

At the end of the course, eight of the 21 respondents were in the normal band, eight were borderline and five were in the abnormal band. Whilst 10 (48%) young people recorded a lower total difficulties score, three (14%) remained the same and eight (38%) had a higher score. These results would suggest that whilst some young people had seen a reduction in the difficulties that they experience at the end of Option Two, others had had no such change and some appear to be experiencing greater difficulties. These results show a similar pattern to the current results for Option One (Ward, Collier, Thurston, forthcoming).

3.7 Partnership working

Although the Youth Federation has previously worked in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Service, the RESPECT programme has presented a number of challenges and opportunities for the two organisations. On an operational level these have been in relation to referral mechanisms, the Practitioners Group and joint activities, and at a strategic level, the funding stream and the Governance Board.

3.7.1 Referrals to Option Two

The referral mechanisms and procedures for Option Two have been discussed earlier in this Chapter (see section 3.4). For the smooth operation of Option Two and to ensure that the young people who can benefit most from this intervention receive a service, it is crucial that the referral procedures for RESPECT as a whole are clear to both the referring agencies and the programme's staff.

The Youth Federation managers argue that only those young people who could not engage with Option One should be referred to Option Two in order to use the available resources to the greatest effect. Conversely, there are young people who Youth Federation staff think are unsuitable for the Option because of their needs or circumstances: places allocated to the young person who was referred despite an imminent custodial sentence, for example, or young people who were too old to return to school would reduce the capacity of Option two to take young people where there is more potential to make a positive impact. Youth Federation staff also suggested that failure to engage inappropriate referrals could have a negative effect on their outcomes which, in turn, may reflect poorly on the overall success of the RESPECT programme.

Individual referral agencies are also partners within the RESPECT programme and they have a role, given appropriate advice and information, to make appropriate referrals and to engage the young people they refer, before, during and after they attend a course. This is particularly the case if the Youth Federation is to respond to requests from individual agencies, as it did to the YOT in the summer of 2007, to run groups for them. To ensure that resources are used effectively, there needs to be a greater degree of certainty that the majority of the young people who are referred will attend the course.

3.7.2 The Practitioners Group

The Practitioners Group was established as a forum for sharing information and shaping the operation of the programme. Managers from the Youth Federation said that they had found this Group to be a valuable mechanism for ensuring that operational issues were addressed by practitioners and kept separate from the governance of the programme: they welcomed it as a structured channel of communication between Option One and Option Two and as a forum which enabled all partners to gather information and present their views.

However, whilst the Practitioners Group met three times during the first eight months of the programme, it has not met since April 2007. During this time there have been issues about the way that the different elements of the programme are working together at an operational level (with referrals, for example), which have not always been communicated or discussed in a systematic way. Given that the Governance Board is the main decision making body, it might consider whether there is a role for the Practitioners Group in the future or not.

3.7.3 Activities and training

The Youth Federation has suggested that there are areas where the links between the Fire Service and Youth Federation could be further exploited so that each organisation could benefit from the others' specialist skills.

There is a proposal to include a visit to the Fire and Rescue Service headquarters so that Option Two participants could take part in practical fire-related activities. Youth workers believe that by increasing the contact between young people and the Fire and Rescue Service it will be possible to heighten awareness of fire safety, expose young people to positive role models and reduce some of the barriers that they suggest exist between disaffected young people and the fire officers.

The Youth Federation managers have also suggested that the RESPECT staff who deliver Option One could benefit from undertaking youth work training with the Federation thus providing the opportunity for other members of the RESPECT programme to learn from the experience of the Youth Federation and its staff.

3.7.4 Funding

The flow of cash from central government to the Fire Service and then to the Youth Federation has highlighted a practical issue associated with bringing such different organisations together to work for a common strategic aim.

A critical issue for the Youth Federation is that they receive prompt payment for the work that they undertake for the RESPECT programme. If invoices are not paid in a timely fashion, the Youth Federation has to find alternative sources of funding to pay for outgoings such as wages, external contractors, transport and other running costs. This often involves borrowing funding from other activities and programmes.

The Youth Federation argued that the Fire and Rescue Service do not fully appreciate the financial workings of a sector that does not have large contingency funds available to them. Some discussions have taken place between the Youth Federation and the Fire and Rescue Service in relation to this issue, at which the Federation has argued that to ensure the security of the RESPECT programme in its current format, Youth Federation invoices may need to be paid in a different timeframe from the usual Fire and Rescue Services procedures. These discussions are currently ongoing.

3.7.5 Governance

The Youth Federation was positive about the structures that had been established for the governance of the RESPECT programme as there was a clear differentiation between operational elements (addressed by the Practitioners Group) and strategic and contractual issues (the responsibility of the Governance Board).

The Youth Federation valued the Governance Board meetings as a forum to discuss issues that affected one or more elements of the programme. They did, however, raise concerns about the lack of attendance by representatives from some of the partners. It was suggested that all partners in the RESPECT programme should have a regular presence at board meetings. The Youth Federation expressed the view that this lack of attendance also meant that partners were not entirely clear about the work that was being undertaken in some areas of the programme, any issues that might have emerged and how the programme as a whole was engaging with young people and meeting its objectives. The Youth Federation suggested that the lack of representation

of all partners at the Governance Board had the potential to undermine both the partnership and the RESPECT programme.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described the development of Option Two and its operation during the spring and summer of 2007. This has been a period during which referral and operation procedures have been refined and the Youth Federation has run their first Option Two courses. The chapter raises a number of issues which have implications for the RESPECT programme at a strategic and operational level and for the evaluation: these are discussed in the final chapter of this report. Chapter 4 moves on to look at developments in the implementation of the *On the Streets* project, another element of the RESPECT programme.

Chapter 4

The implementation of *On the Streets*

4.1 Introduction

The RESPECT programme has adopted a different format within Halton, as the local authority suggested that the area already had adequate alternative curriculum programmes for young people aged 11 to 16 years. Instead, Halton Youth Service proposed that a detached youth work approach would be more appropriate in Halton, provision that could reach and engage young people in youth nuisance 'hot spots' during the evening, weekends and school holidays. This chapter focuses on the development and implementation of the resulting project, *On the Streets*, between March and September 2007.

4.2 Background to and philosophy of *On the Streets*

On the Streets was devised as part of Halton Youth Service's contribution to the local crime and disorder agenda before the inception of the RESPECT programme. When the Fire and Rescue Service contacted the Chief Executive of the local authority about their possible involvement in the developing RESPECT programme, Halton decided that *On the Streets* was the service with which they could collaborate and that would meet the aims of both agencies. *On the Streets* is based upon a detached approach to youth work. This approach allows youth workers the flexibility to meet and interact with young people in their own environment, making contact with young people who may socialise *On the Streets* rather than use facilities such as youth centres.

In line with Halton's 'Youth VOICE' strategy, young people who engage with *On the Streets* are provided with the opportunity to help plan, structure and evaluate the activities that they would like to take part in (Halton Strategic Partnership, 2007). The rationale underlying this approach is that young people will feel empowered and involved with the decision-making process, and consequently feel less alienated from the wider community. The Youth Service also strives to engage young people with other community groups via joint projects such as of 'clean up' schemes, where they can work with other residents to tidy and maintain their local area. Youth Service managers believe that by adopting this approach of, firstly, empowering young people, and then strengthening the relationship between them and the community, it may be possible to reduce the level of youth nuisance and bring about sustainable changes in

behaviour. Thus, the Youth Service does not consider *On the Streets* to be a diversionary scheme that offers only a short-term intervention for young people but part of a broader strategy to involve young people in their communities.

As a result of the process by which the project was developed, *On the Streets* is currently funded from multiple sources: these are the Youth Service core budget, *Invest to Save* via the RESPECT programme, and, until March 2008, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). Funding from the Youth Service core budget will make up some of the shortfall when NRF comes to an end. This period of work for the *On the Streets* project has been described as a pilot phase by the Youth Service and, as such, insights and experiences gained would feed into the later stages of the its development.

4.3 Objectives and mode of operation

Whilst *On the Streets* is part of the RESPECT programme, the underlying philosophy and format mean that the project's objectives differ from those of Option One and Option Two. *On the Streets* in Halton does not have the links with schools and education services in the same way as Option One and Option Two and so the reduction of exclusions and unauthorised absences do not appear as targets for their work. Furthermore, although a reduction in anti-social behaviour is often associated with areas in which youth workers operate and is considered a positive consequence of youth work, the Head of the Youth Service argued that their primary objectives are to engage young people and facilitate their learning.

In line with the Youth Service's broader objectives, the *On the Streets* project has four key performance indicators against which the success of the service is measured:

- the number of young people with whom contact is made;
- the number of young people who participate in activities;
- the number of young people who achieve outcomes from their participation;
- the number of young people who gain accreditation following their involvement.

The broader nature of this initiative, however, the involvement of the Fire and Rescue service, and the way that *On the Streets* is targeted at wards where there is statistical evidence of 'entrenched' youth nuisance, means that other agencies and local

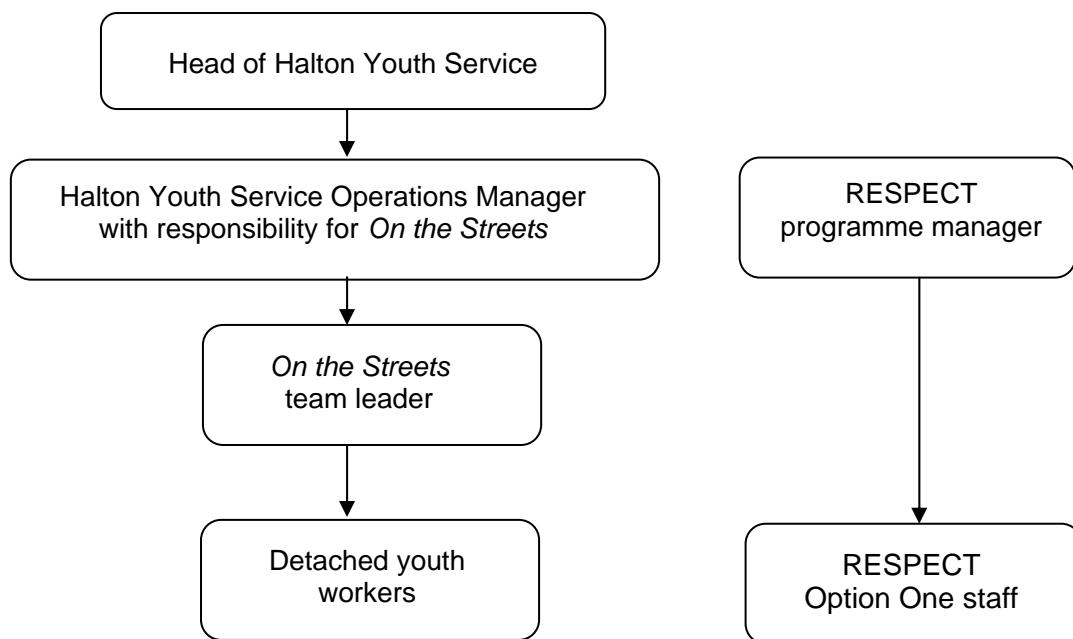
politicians are also looking to reduce the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour, hoax calls and deliberate small fires.

The *On the Streets* project will operate in a pre-selected ward for a period of approximately six months. During this time, youth service and RESPECT staff will be out during the evening on three nights a week to make contact with young people through detached youth work and, if possible, engage them in organised activities.

4.4 Project management and staffing

Although part of the RESPECT programme run by the Fire and Rescue Service, the Youth Service manages the *On the Streets* project. Employed directly by the Youth Service, an operations manager oversees the strategic management of the project and a team leader is responsible for the day-to-day running of *On the Streets*. The RESPECT programme manager, working alongside the Youth Service's team leader, supervises the Fire and Rescue Service staff working on the project. Figure 4.4.1 illustrates the management and staff structure of the *On the Streets* project.

Figure 4.4.1 Management and staff structure of *On the Streets*



4.4.1 The team leader's role

Following the appointment of the team leader in December 2006, most of the contact between the project and the RESPECT programme was through this person. This

contact included the team leader's attendance at strategic functions such as the risk management workshop as well as meetings to discuss the day-to-day running of the project and undertaking the detached work.

There were clearly issues with the breadth of this role. The team leader explained that she did not always feel that she was the most appropriate person to carry out all of these tasks and that she became 'overcommitted' whilst trying to compensate for the lack of Youth Service staff on the project. The team leader has since resigned from her position, and as a result, it was necessary for the Youth Service to recruit again to this post.

The Head of Halton Youth Service reported that steps have been taken to define the role and responsibilities of a future team leader more clearly in order to minimise the likelihood of a recurrence of this situation. The new team leader, for example, will be responsible for the operational running of the *On the Streets* project, and will have no involvement in strategic management issues. These will be the responsibility of the operations manager and the Head of the Youth Service.

4.4.2 Detached workers and training

The Youth Service and the Fire and Rescue Service both allocated staff to go out onto the streets and run activities that would engage young people with whom they established contact. The original plan was that the Fire Service and the Youth Service would each provide three staff who would work three nights a week between 6pm and 9pm.

However, both the Fire and Rescue Service and the Youth Service were unable to provide this level of staffing. As a consequence, three members of the Fire Service's RESPECT staff and two members of the Youth Service were each assigned to *On the Streets* for six hours per week. The Fire and Rescue Service staff, however, were already employed on Option One and sometimes had exhausted their contractual hours during the day and so could not be called upon to undertake detached youth work. During the six months from March 2007, by necessity these workers have included the RESPECT programme manager and the *On the Streets* team leader.

The reduced number of staff and hours of work decreased the level of service that could be provided: this was exacerbated at times by staff sickness and when training

was required. On occasions, the Youth Service tried to utilise part-time or sessional staff in order to keep sessions running, but this was not always possible, and as a consequence, some activities involving the young people had to be cancelled at short notice.

As the Fire and Rescue Service staff employed by the RESPECT programme were not qualified youth workers, the Youth Service considered that it was necessary for them to undertake some youth worker training, which was provided by the Youth Service. Training sessions were designed to focus on safety issues, contacting and engaging young people, and a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of youth workers. Due to a limited number of staff hours, however, Fire Service staff were not always available to attend Youth Service training and the decision was taken that to maintain the detached service and engage with the young people, further training would have to be provided 'on the job' whilst they were *On the Streets*.

In order to avoid this problem from September 2007, one of the three evening sessions each week was planned to be a training session. This will, however, impact upon the time that the team spend interacting with young people on the streets.

4.4.3 Training for fire personnel

In addition to the training for the RESPECT staff that needed to be focussed on the issues around the practicalities of undertaking detached youth work, Halton Youth Service has also provided some training to station-based fire-fighters in the locality. This training, which has taken place during the daytime watch, had two elements. The first has been to speak to fire-fighters about how they can respond to young people when they are answering a callout and the second aspect is how they relate to young people if they are taking part in an activity as part of *On the Streets*.

The Youth Service argued that although the training that had taken place had been productive, it needed to be an ongoing feature of the project so that stereotypical perceptions and issues relating to fire-fighter's interaction with young people could continue to be addressed.

4.5 Selecting an area

From the public launch of the *On the Streets* project in February 2007 until a celebration event in August 2007, the project was implemented in the ward of Ditton in Widnes. This area was selected by the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership as, according to data compiled by Cheshire Police, it was an area of entrenched youth nuisance with 274 incidents of youth-related anti-social behaviour between January and May 2006, a higher figure than the surrounding areas. The *On the Streets* team targeted specific areas within Ditton in which the available data and their own reconnaissance indicated that youth nuisance and youth-related anti-social behaviour was most common, and where young people were regularly on the streets.

4.5.1 Working in Ditton

On commencing the detached work within Ditton, the *On the Streets* team spent time in this area talking to older residents and young people in order to identify their concerns and needs. By doing so it was possible to gather intelligence about the local area, and start building a relationship with both residents and young people. Staff visited the area during the evenings and on days when they believed they had the greatest chance of making contact with young people.

Once youth workers had located young people who were 'hanging around' the streets, they introduced themselves and explained who they were and what they were aiming to do through the *On the Streets* project. They provided young people with the opportunity to highlight and discuss any concerns, and to suggest activities that they would like to be involved with, along with improvements that they thought could be made to the area. Often when they did this, young people were socialising and drinking alcohol in shopping areas and open spaces. Where this was the case, staff took the opportunity of raising issues of alcohol awareness.

The Youth Service reported that initially, some groups of young people were reluctant to engage with them, saying that they had been promised things before but '*nothing ever happened*'. The *On the Streets* team leader reported, however, that relationships developed as a result of their regular contact with the young people. Some of the young people they met were happy to speak to the workers on the street but did not want to become involved in *On the Streets* activities: youth workers were, however, able to provide advice and guidance to them when it was requested on topics such as

employment and training, family relationships and drug awareness, and were able to signpost young people towards appropriate services.

Young people who engaged with the *On the Streets* workers were provided with the opportunity to propose activities in which they would like to take part. The activities that young people in Ditton chose included football, filming, and a fashion project. Unfortunately, the Youth Service database does not appear to contain comprehensive information on attendance at any activity other than the football sessions.

- **Football**

On the Streets staff organised a football session from 6pm to 9pm on a Friday evening. This ran from a local school that had a floodlit all weather pitch that could be hired by the Youth Service on a weekly basis. The sessions were run by Sports Development and supervised by Fire Service and *On the Streets* staff; after an initial period, and following consultation with the participants, the project also engaged local police community support officers to provide an opportunity for the young people to have some contact with police staff in a positive environment. Youth Service staff saw this as the most successful element of the project in Ditton and figures from the Youth Service suggest that the activity was attended by a total of 130 young people, with around 70 young people present at each session (S. Carr, personal communication, October 10, 2007).

- **Where I live**

Where I live was an arts activity in which young people used filming equipment to make a documentary about their community and the changes they would like to see in the area. Young people raised concerns about a number of issues including the level of deprivation within their community, the lack of provision available to them, and the fear of crime. The film not only provided the young people with a voice and the opportunity to discuss what they thought their community would benefit from, but also allowed them to learn new skills. The film was shown at the *On the Streets* Celebration Event in August 2007 and local forums: one immediate outcome of this was authorisation from the Chief Executive of the local authority which enabled the installation of football goal posts in the area.

- **Fashion project**

A fashion project was run from Ditton Community Centre by the *On the Streets* team on a Wednesday evening. The aim of this activity, as described by Halton Youth Service,

was to work with the young women to raise their level of self-esteem and confidence so that they did not have to use alcohol '*to give them a boosted ego*'. As part of the project, which met weekly, young women designed clothes and accessories, and produced posters and other art work: fashion was also used as a tool of intervention to explore wider social issues with the young women. Again, this activity helped young people to develop specific skills and knowledge as well as providing an opportunity for them to engage in positive activities. The project ended with a fashion show at the *On the Streets* Celebration Event at which the participants displayed their work.

- **Other opportunities**

In addition to the above activities, a young women's project and workshops addressing issues of sexual health, smoking and alcohol were organised for young people. Opportunities were also provided for young people to take part in the Local Youth Forum, the Community Games held in Runcorn, sports leadership and coaching courses and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

4.6 The impact of *On the Streets*

The impact of the *On the Streets* project can be measured on a number of levels. The first is an examination of incidents of youth-related anti-social behaviour, hoax calls and small deliberate fires, the second is through the statistics on the level of involvement of young people in positive activities before, during and after the project and the third is a qualitative analysis of the impact of the project for the young people and the local community.

Statistics are currently available for part of the time that the *On the Streets* team was working in Ditton. Figures provided by Cheshire Police (D. Williams, personal communication, August 16, 2007) show that the number of incidents of youth-related anti-social behaviour incidents reduced by 38% from 274 between January and May 2006 to 171 between January and May 2007, and that there were 'less than half the number of nuisance fires' reported in this area.

Information produced by the Youth Service in a report to the Current and Repeat Anti-social Behaviour Group in July 2007 (D. Williams, personal communication, August 16, 2007) stated that in a six month period, the *On the Streets* team engaged with approximately 350 young people aged between 11 and 20 years. Data compiled by the Youth Service, also contained in this report, suggest that approximately 200 of these

young people have become participants (these are young people who the project has '*met with*' at least four times and who have been involved in various activities) and 100 have achieved recorded outcomes (that is described by the Youth Service as '*where the young people worked in-depth with the team revisiting issues, identifying needs and young people achieving a real change in attitude and behaviour from where they were when the team first met them*'). The Youth Service also reported that 'around 25/30 young people' have achieved an accredited outcome: in the main these are people who attend the Friday football session (S. Carr, personal communication, October 10, 2007).

The evaluators have not yet been able to obtain the raw data from the Youth Service database in order to analyse this information in more detail (by age, sex and activity, for example). It is hoped that this work and further analysis of the young people's involvement with the Youth Service before and after the presence of the *On the Streets* team in their area can be completed during the next phase of the evaluation.

The evaluators have spoken to 18 young people, many of whom spoke positively about their involvement in *On the Streets* activities and their contact with the project's workers. The *On the Streets* team also shared some anecdotal evidence which suggests that the project has been successful in engaging young people in Ditton. There has been a positive response from some local residents and a shop worker and the police community support officers have suggested that the project has helped 'fantastically' in their relationships with young people in the locality. The *On the Streets* team leader reported that the contact between the young people and officers from uniformed services had begun to dispel stereotypes from both the perspective of the young people and members of the Police, and the Fire Service.

There have also been some changes to local services in response to the project. The football sessions and the fashion activity are currently continuing, goalposts have been erected on a vacant piece of land near to where some of the young people were congregating and the Borough Council is entering into discussions about the feasibility of youth shelters which can be an informal gathering place for young people and a contact point for the Youth Service.

The *On the Streets* team leader acknowledged that some young people had not engaged with the project and others '*have gone back down the crime route*' for a variety of reasons. What happens to the young people who have engaged and built up

relationships with the *On the Streets* team once they withdraw to another area remains to be seen.

4.7 Sustainability

From September 2007, the main focus of the *On the Streets* project moved from Ditton to another area with a high level of 'entrenched youth nuisance', the ward of Halton Brook in Runcorn. In order to sustain the work done that had been undertaken in Ditton, a plan was devised, toward which the Youth Service and the RESPECT programme have allocated £7,500 for its implementation.

The two police community support officers, who have been involved in the Friday night football session from the outset, continued to be involved in this activity and the Youth Service employed four coaches to run the football sessions until March 2008. A member of the *On the Streets* team will visit the football session on a monthly basis in order to monitor progress, address any issues and promote links with the local youth centre. It is planned that the fashion activity will be adopted by the local youth centre and will supervised by the centre's own team. As with the football activity, a member of the *On the Streets* team will visit sessions to monitor progress.

Some work will continue on the streets in Ditton, with the outreach work from the local youth centre team, although staffing levels will not enable them to do this as frequently as the *On the Streets* team. The Youth Service hopes that the outreach work will maintain the relationships that have been developed with young people, as well as providing further opportunities for the young people to engage with staff from the local youth centre.

Although the sustainability plan suggests that staff from the local youth centre will continue to meet the young people of Ditton as part of their outreach work, there has not been a period of joint working or handover with the *On the Streets* project. The result of this is that many of the young people will not be familiar with the local team and they will not necessarily associate them with the *On the Streets* staff with whom they had built up a rapport. In an attempt to alleviate any issues that may exist in this regard, and improve the way in which the *On the Streets* and youth centre/area based teams work together in future, the Youth Service intends there to be more joint planning and working between the teams in each new locality. In this way, it should be possible for a local team to become more familiar with the young people who the *On*

the Streets team have engaged with so that they can maintain these relationships once *On the Streets* has withdrawn.

4.8 Partnership working

RESPECT involves a partnership of organisations, with different cultures, systems and operating procedures, to work jointly in order to achieve the programme's objectives. The early implementation of *On the Streets* has identified a number of operational and strategic issues.

4.8.1 Governance

Although Halton Borough Council has a representative assigned to the RESPECT Governance Board, there have been concerns raised by a number of Board members about their level of attendance (Ward, Collier & Thurston, 2007) and the level of engagement that this element has with the wider RESPECT programme. A lack of communication within the local authority was apparent as the Youth Service suggested that they were not aware that Halton had not been represented at the Governance Board during the year to September 2007: this situation should now be rectified, however, as the Borough's representation has passed from Children's Services to the Youth Service and the role has been assigned to the operational manager for *On the Streets*.

4.8.2 Lead responsibility

There has also been some discussion between the Fire Service and the Youth Service about the way that *On the Streets* is publicly presented and which organisation, if any, is the lead agency. There was some suggestion that the Fire Service saw it as a RESPECT-led project and the Youth Service saw it as a Youth Service-led project: during summer 2007 it became apparent that the two organisations needed to clarify the partnership arrangements and speak publicly with a 'common voice'. It was suggested by a member of the Youth Service that there was initially a '*learn as they went*' approach to the project, and that more detailed planning and discussion between the Youth Service and the Fire Service before the project was launched may have minimised some of the issues that have arisen. Although the view of the *On the Streets* team leader was that the project had worked satisfactorily, she argued that a clear service level agreement should be put into place to clarify roles and responsibilities and to promote it as a jointly managed project.

4.8.3 Staffing levels

The primary resource of the *On the Streets* project is the staff who meet with the young people and facilitate their involvement in activities. The staffing input from each organisation has been a limiting factor for the project during the first six months, affecting the level of training that was provided before staff began the detached work, the number of nights *On the Streets* was operational, the number of areas visited and the provision of specific activities. Managers from both the Youth Service and the Fire and Rescue Service spoke about the need to establish a full complement of staff from each organisation if the project was to achieve its objectives.

4.8.4 Safeguarding

One further area where there were clear policy differences between the Fire Service and the Youth Service was in relation to Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, risk assessment and parental consent.

It was, for example, sometimes unclear as to what risk assessment and parental consent procedures needed to be completed, before activities such as hose running, could be undertaken by young people. Because the necessary risk assessment and parental consent required by the Youth Service had not been completed, this was an example of a session that did not take place. This uncertainty had the potential to have a negative impact on the project because, with little notice or explanation, young people were not able to undertake activities which the *On the Streets* team had said they would deliver; given the concerns raised by young people about feeling 'let down' by other organisations, not to deliver activities as arranged might lead to some young people disengaging from *On the Streets*.

Concerns have also been raised by the Youth Service with regard to Fire and Rescue Service staff who may start to work more regularly with young people through the *On the Streets* project but who are not CRB checked. This issue does not relate to the RESPECT staff, who all have enhanced CRB checks, but to operational fire fighters who might attend activities with fire service equipment. It is not essential for operational fire-fighters to have a CRB check unless they have a specific role such as a cadet leader; but the Youth Service maintains that if there is to be a 'regular connection' between young people and Fire Service personnel, they should have a current CRB check. This means that any operational fire-fighters who do attend an *On the Streets*

session must also be accompanied and supervised by a member of the RESPECT team.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has described the implementation of the *On the Streets* project in Halton. It illustrates the diversity of the different elements of the RESPECT programme both in terms of its underlying philosophy and the mode of operation. The chapter has raised a number of issues which have implications for the development of the RESPECT programme a strategic level and operational level and for the evaluation: these are discussed in the following chapter of this report.

Chapter 5

Implications for strategy, operations and evaluation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the main findings identified by the evaluation team during the implementation of the RESPECT programme between April and September 2007. The chapter is divided into three sections in order to highlight implications for the strategic direction of the programme, its operational development and the evaluation. Whilst some issues relate to RESPECT as a whole, others refer to specific elements of the programme.

5.2 Strategic issues

The major strategic issues that have been identified by the Phase Two Implementation Evaluation are the development of three distinct models of service delivery within the RESPECT programme and issues that are pertinent to building a strong and effective partnership.

5.2.1 Different models of delivery

The first year of the RESPECT programme has seen the emergence of three models of delivery that are distinctive in terms of their underpinning 'philosophy', location, content, duration, and the extent to which they can, and do directly work towards the RESPECT objectives.

Each of the three elements of the RESPECT programme (Option One, Option Two and *On the Streets*) has developed under the auspices of the lead partner (the Fire and Rescue Service, the Youth Federation and Halton Youth Service respectively). The different models have emerged because the partner organisations have been allowed the freedom to develop projects based on their expertise, values and, in the case of *On the Streets*, local political agendas. Some of the developments that have taken place since each element was introduced have also been a result of the lead agencies responding to the expressed needs of referrers.

The key differences between the three major elements of the programme appear to be as follows:

-
- the nature of the contact with the young people – whether it encompasses group or individual work, structured or unstructured, ‘disciplined’ or ‘informal’ contact;
 - the extent to which the provision is targeted at specific individuals or is a universal service;
 - the objectives of each element, particularly in relation to improving school attendance and reducing exclusions;
 - the duration of the work with a young person and the structure of any post-intervention support or contact;
 - the domains of a young person’s life that are touched by the intervention – whether the work is solely with the individual or if there is contact with their family, school or with their peers and other people in their community;
 - the geographical location of the intervention and whether the impact will be the same across different areas of Cheshire.

This is not the format that was originally planned for the RESPECT programme, as described in the bid, but is how it has emerged during the implementation phase. Although the impact of the different models is yet to be evaluated, and so the outcomes of each element for the young people, the community and society as still unclear, it is timely for the Governance Board to consider the following:

- whether members are satisfied with the direction the programme has taken;
- whether the three models join up to form a coherent package;
- how decisions are made about deploying additional resources or reducing resources if they are stretched, given that the elements are so different;
- whether all of the RESPECT targets can be met in all locations through these models, as currently delivered.

5.2.2 Partnership working

The partners named in the RESPECT Partnership Agreement are Cheshire Fire Service, the Youth Federation, Cheshire County Council, Halton Borough Council, Warrington Borough Council and Connexions. The implementation evaluation has identified programme governance and the need for ‘joined up’ operational and strategic thinking as an issue for all partners and the development of interagency working as a

particular issue for the organisations which lead the three elements, the Fire and Rescue Service, the Youth Federation and Halton Youth Service.

5.2.2.1 Governance

The Governance Board is the overseeing and decision-making body for the RESPECT programme. As such, it is important that its composition is appropriate and that members regularly attend the board meetings. The Fire and Rescue Service, the Youth Federation and Halton Youth Service have the opportunity to give effective feedback on the operation of each element of the project if they are present at the Board meetings. Representatives from the partner agencies each bring with them an area of expertise that can contribute to debate about the vision for, and successful development of, the RESPECT programme.

The representation from Secondary School Heads as described in the Partnership Agreement and Terms of Reference (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, 2006b) has not materialised and the Governance Board might consider whether or not it is feasible and/or desirable to pursue this. It is also apparent that future representation from Halton will be via the Youth Service rather than the wider local authority (children's services/education attend from Cheshire and Warrington). Given the breadth of the objectives of the RESPECT programme, and the changes to the organisation of Connexions and youth services across the region, the Governance Board might consider whether the representation from each of the localities is appropriate for the remainder of the programme in order to align itself with the emerging organisational structures in Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

5.2.2.2 Strategic and operational planning

The implementation evaluation has provided an opportunity to reflect on the developments within each element of the RESPECT programme. It is clear that some of the changes to Option One and Option Two have developed in response to requests from referrers or partner agencies. Whilst there has been a lot of positive learning from these changes or developments, in order to try to ensure that there is equity in the operation of the programme (in the provision of mini-courses, single school groups and service specific groups such as the YOT group, for example), when referrers ask for tailored provision (such as the Option Two YOT group), they put forward young people who will attend and who have the greatest potential to benefit from the programme.

Each new development has financial and operational implications that require consideration by staff working in partner agencies.

A further development during the last six months was the RESPECT summer scheme. This took place in Runcorn during July and August 2007 and was part of a wider Fire and Rescue Service agenda, an 'arson reduction campaign'. Whilst this was clearly a priority for Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, it is unclear how the decision to deploy RESPECT resources to this project, rather than to another locality or group of individuals was made, and whether this summer scheme best served the overall needs of the programme and made the greatest possible impact on the programme's objectives.

5.2.2.3 Development of interagency working

The implementation of the RESPECT programme has seen the development of structures and systems that support partnership working. The evaluation identified a number of areas where agencies would benefit from giving further consideration to how to work together to resolve issues which have arisen as a result of a different way of working or organisational procedures.

When there are issues that require resolution, it is helpful if the lines of responsibility are clear. Whilst the public face of the RESPECT programme is one of a partnership led by the Fire and Rescue Service, in reality, the three main elements have each been led by different bodies: the Fire Service, Youth Federation and Halton Youth Service. This may not be a problem if there is clarity about the role of each agency and the decision making structures for interagency projects.

One example of an issue which was debated by the Fire Service and Halton Youth Service staff during the implementation of *On the Streets* were procedures relating to safeguarding children. As the two organisations have different procedures for risk assessments, gaining parental consent and CRB checks, in order to deliver the project as planned, an agreement on the procedures to be followed had to be negotiated during the project's delivery. It would be beneficial if it was clear whether, in such circumstances, the position of the 'lead' agency takes precedent or, if not, what the alternative means of resolving issues such as this might be.

The benefit of systems whereby the partnership can work within each organisation's structures and constraints has also been highlighted with reference to funding arrangements. The delay in the distribution of funds for the programme has caused particular difficulties with cash flow for the Youth Federation. To finance their work on RESPECT in the short term, the Youth Federation has been forced to juggle funds between pots allocated to different projects, a practice which may be both inappropriate and unsustainable.

5.3 Operational issues

Operational processes have continued to develop as each element of the programme had become fully implemented. The evaluation identified a number of issues which have an impact upon the delivery of each element and which may affect the outcomes that can be achieved for the programme as a whole.

5.3.1 Future direction and developments

During this phase of the implementation of the RESPECT programme it has been apparent that some developments (such as the Option One single school groups, the peer mentoring role, the mini-course and the YOT course on Option Two) have taken place in response to the expressed needs of referrers: the response of the programme has often been rapid with new provisions being put into place within a relatively short period of time.

The RESPECT programme was planned with a developmental phase but the current mode of operation raises questions about whether the programme can or should continue to respond to requests from referrers in this way and whether there should be more discussion and a longer lead-in time for new developments. It may also be that the expectations of referrers have now been raised in terms of the programme being able to respond to future requests. As the RESPECT programme is now fully operational, it is timely, at this point, to consider the direction of the programme for the next 18 months: for example, what kind of requests can be accommodated in the future and what procedures might be put into place to consider the implementation of further developments.

5.3.2 Referral processes

Option One and Option Two of the RESPECT programme are targeted interventions and as such, have procedures for the referral and allocation of places to young people. There have been a number of changes in the referral procedures over the first year of operation and the findings of the implementation evaluation suggest that it would be beneficial to reflect on the clarity of the procedures and on the extent to which they enable equal and equitable access: do referrers have adequate information about the different options, are the young people who could benefit most from each intervention being allocated a place and are single school or single agency groups being offered to those localities or groups in most need?

The referral process means that the programme has accepted rather than selected participants. Although some guidelines have been established, each referrer selects which young people are referred to Option One and Option Two of the RESPECT programme and all are allocated a place if there is one available – if there are not, the referrer is asked to prioritise. The single school groups, mini-course and YOT group have been provided in response to requests from specific schools or other referrers. If the programme is to achieve its objectives and have the greatest possible impact, then places on Option One and Option Two need to be allocated to those young people in Cheshire and Warrington who are most at risk and who could benefit most from the particular intervention.

If places are to be allocated to those who could benefit most, referrers need to have adequate information, both to make informed decisions about which individuals they should refer to which courses, and to be aware of any alternative provision if they have evidence of larger scale needs within their school population or agency clientèle. Once the programme has ensured that all referrers have the same opportunity to refer to RESPECT, the programme would be in a better position to make decisions about the allocation of resources if, as in the past, the demand for places is greater than the number available.

On the Streets operates in a different way from Option One and Option Two and, as a universal service, provides opportunities in which all young people aged between 13 and 19 years in a locality can take part. The focus of the project is on participation in activities and achieving accredited outcomes and although a reduction in anti-social behaviour, hoax calls, small deliberate fires, exclusions from school and increased

school attendance might be by-products of a greater level of participation in youth service and community activities, they are not explicit objectives of the project: furthermore, when young people become involved, *On the Streets* would not know whether they had issues in these areas.

The universal nature of the *On the Streets* project and its broader objectives raise the question of whether the programme in Halton has the same focus on all of the RESPECT objectives as the other elements and, consequently, whether the impact of the RESPECT programme can be measured in an identical way across the three local authority areas.

5.3.3 Facilitating medium and longer term impact

Whilst another stream of the RESPECT evaluation will investigate the impact of each part of the programme, the implementation evaluation has identified structures and practices that may assist or impede the extent to which the young people who take part in a particular element of the RESPECT programme can benefit from their involvement. One aspect is the breadth of the service that is provided and another is the time constraints on the intervention.

5.3.3.1 The breadth of the service

A growing body of research that has looked at the way that services can make a difference to children and young people has done so within the context of risk and protective factors and the development of resilience. The lives of young people are influenced by a myriad of factors that can broadly be categorised into the domains of the individual, the family, the school and the community (see for example, McCarthy, Laing & Walker, 2004). Each domain can encompass both risk and protective factors: risk factors are "... characteristics or attributes of an individual, family, social group, or community that increase the probability of certain disorders or behaviours arising at a later point in time." (Bhabra, Dinos & Ghate, 2006, p.3) and protective factors are "... those internal and external forces that help children resist or ameliorate risk" (Fraser, 1997, p.3 as cited in McCarthy et al., 2004). The life chances of each young person can be improved by a reduction in risk factors, by enhancing protective factors and by enabling the individual to develop resilience in order that they are better able to cope.

All three of the major elements of the RESPECT programme, in different ways, work primarily within the individual domain, engaging directly with young people to reduce risk factors (such as absence from school), enhance protective factors (such as increasing self-confidence) and develop resilience. The work in the other domains is more piecemeal: *On the Street* is able to address issues for young people alongside their peers and in the community domain; Option Two has developed mechanisms to facilitate contact with the young person's family and schools, and, in some cases, community projects after the course; and Option One has contact with schools through the School Liaison Officer.

The family and school domains, in particular, are clearly important for young people. Other research (such as Frankham, Edwards, Humphrey & Roberts, 2007) reflects on the importance of family involvement, suggesting that interventions with disaffected young people can be greatly enhanced if work is also undertaken with parents and carers. This contact, it is argued, enables the project to better understand the issues facing the young person and encourages parents to support the project, believing that it is focussed upon the child's best interests. Within the RESPECT programme, the experience of the Option One school-based graduation ceremony (discussed in section 2.3.1) demonstrated some of the difficulties of sustaining a positive experience and transferring learning to the school environment.

A further difference between the different models that has been adopted by the three elements of the programme is that Option Two is the only one that has built-in regular one-to-one sessions with the young person. The question that arises for Option One and *On the Streets* is whether individual issues facing each young person can always be addressed in a group setting? Should there be an opportunity for one-to-one work in all elements of the programme or could this be better achieved for Option One, in particular, through joint work with the referrer?

Whilst the impact evaluation will consider in more detail the extent to which the programme is able to change and re-motive young people, if its work is limited to one or two domains, and is primarily undertaken in groups, each lead agency could reflect upon the breadth of their work and consider whether it is appropriate or practical to extend it into the other domains and use additional methods of delivery.

5.3.3.2 Time constraints

The primary focus of each element of the RESPECT programme is a time limited intervention. Option One is up to 50 hours over a maximum of 11 weeks, Option Two is similarly an 11 week course, whilst *On the Streets* provides a service in a locality for around six months. It could be considered that these are relatively short time periods in which to facilitate major changes in the lives of young people.

The different elements of the programme have devised ways to extend this contact. The Youth Federation has developed systems for telephone, text and email contact outside and beyond the one day per week and *On the Streets* hopes to facilitate contact between the young people they engage with and the local area team to encourage sustained involvement when the project moves to a new area. The extent to which each element of the programme can maintain contact with a growing number of young people for three or more years is questionable but for Option One and Option Two, which have a relatively short period of contact with each participant, it would be beneficial if the schools and other referring agencies take an active role before, during and after the course so that each young person can build upon their learning and achievements. There may be a danger that a positive experience with the RESPECT programme becomes an isolated and time limited experience if its breadth is not extended or its impact reinforced.

5.3.4 Partnership working

The evaluation found that the major issues relating to partnership working in the operational sphere were the further potential for sharing skills and resources, the need to maintain levels of staffing: it also reflected upon the value of a discussion forum for operational staff.

5.3.4.1 Sharing resources and skills

The RESPECT programme has been able to develop by utilising the range of skills and knowledge that each partner has brought to the different aspects of the programme. Staff from schools, education support teams and other referring agencies have also been able to share their views and experiences to aid the implementation of the programme.

Further potential, however, has been identified by partners. This includes the planned integration of some fire service activities on Option Two and the suggestion that Fire and Rescue Service staff, including fire fighters, could benefit from youth work training provided by the Youth Federation and the Youth Service. Resources would need to be prioritised and time identified if further training was deemed to be desirable and was to take place.

5.3.4.2 Staffing

Whilst Option One and Option Two are staffed independently by the Fire and Rescue Service and the Youth Federation respectively, *On the Streets* relies on workers provided by Halton Youth Service and the Fire and Rescue Service. During the first six months of the project, both organisations were unable to provide the level of staffing required for the project to operate as planned. If a more consistent service is to be provided for the young people in Halton, both the Youth Service and the Fire Service will need to ensure that they are able to fully support the agreed staffing rota.

5.3.4.3 The Practitioners Group

The implementation evaluation identified a number of operational issues that are pertinent to more than one element of the programme and, as such, could appropriately be discussed at a forum like the Practitioners Group. Although it has not met since April 2007, the Youth Federation in particular expressed the view that the group could harness the experience of staff on the ground and that it had an important role in ensuring that they were able to contribute to the development of the programme.

5.4 Issues for the evaluation

The evaluators have continued to be involved in many aspects of the RESPECT programme and have found managers and staff to be accessible and open in sharing their experiences. As this particular phase of the evaluation comes to an end, issues which related to data collection and the breadth of the evaluation over the next 18 months were identified.

5.4.1 Data collection

In order to produce of comprehensive picture of the reach of the RESPECT programme, to conduct the unit cost analysis and to provide a foundation for the

qualitative evaluation of needs and impacts, it is imperative that the evaluators have access to complete data sets from referral forms, attendance registers, questionnaires, databases and so on. Although there has been a distinct improvement in the amount and quality of information that is available from each element of the programme, a proportion of forms have still been missing or partially completed and some attendance information is inaccurate. Without this information, the entirety of work of the programme cannot be accurately evidenced.

5.4.2 Breadth of evaluation

The implementation of three distinct models within the RESPECT programme and the developments within each element has resulted in changes to the scope of the evaluation. During the first 16 months, the implementation evaluation of the RESPECT programme has been broader than was anticipated in order to encompass all three elements, and whilst the first phase of the impact evaluation is of Option One (Ward, Collier, & Thurston, forthcoming), it is proposed that, as Option Two and *On the Streets* are very different from Option One in their underlying philosophy and mode of operation, a similar short and medium term impact study should be conducted for Option Two and another for *On the Streets* during 2008.

On completion of these impact reports, the evaluation can then move on as it starts to examine the longer term outcomes for young people who have been involved in the programme. In bringing together the impact evaluation of each individual element, it will be important to uncover the processes that appear to yield the greatest long term impact for the participants. In the later stages, the evaluation will also look at the benefits of the programme for wider society. Referral, attendance and quantitative outcome information at the individual level and area-based statistics relating to the RESPECT objectives will continue to be collected and analysed for the lifetime of the programme.

The introduction of new elements to the RESPECT programme has, and will continue, to have an impact on the scope of the evaluation. The Governance Board, with the evaluators, would need to consider the extent to which any further work can be built into the current plan.

5.5 Conclusion

This report covers the development and implementation of the RESPECT programme between April 2007 and September 2007 and so the findings are a snapshot of the situation at one point in time. As the programme and its systems and procedures continue to develop, some of the issues that have been raised in this report may have already been addressed. The Governance Board will be able to identify the outstanding issues and decide whether action is required.

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Appendix 1 – Option Two initial assessment

Initial Assessment

| Name | Action and Support required |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Qualifications and Achievements | |
| Key Skills; Language, Literacy, Numeracy, Additional Support | |
| Career preferences/Training/Future Goals | |
| Interests and Hobbies | |
| Personal and Social Skills | |
| Health/Personal circumstances | |
| <p>I confirm that I permit the information contained on this form to be shared with Youth Federation Staff and relevant agencies which may help me in fulfilling my future goals: Please highlight any information, which the young person does not wish to be shared with other organisations specifically.</p> <p>Young Person's signature:</p> | |
| Name and signature of Youth Federation Worker: | Date Initial Assessment completed: |

Appendix 2 – Publicity leaflet 2007

programme activities

- Introduction and training agreement
- Team building
- Basic firefighter training
- Water awareness
- Healthy living
- Citizenship
- Fire awareness and hoax calls
- Road traffic awareness
- Outdoor pursuit activities
- Live firefighting
- Visit to fire service headquarters
- Graduation



partners



If you would like any further information on **Respect** or how to refer young people on to the programme please contact us:

Nick Evans - **Respect** Project Manager
01244 342449 - 07776 297802
nick.evans@cheshirefire.gov.uk
www.cheshirefire.gov.uk



respect personal development programme

Improving confidence and promoting good behaviour in young people



The challenges

Working with partners across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington the RESPECT project aims to change and re-motivate the lives of young people and return them to mainstream education.

The challenge is to focus on prevention, team work and the consequences of their actions. RESPECT is a programme which meets the needs of the individual and provides a sense of purpose, a social network and personal support structures.



Option 1

Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service has a long a proud history of working with young people and this option will be led by Fire Service personnel and Firefighters delivering structured, disciplined practical activities. The programme is based at a local fire station and is designed to be challenging, intensive and at times pushing the young person out of their comfort zone. It will address issues around:

- 🔧 Team work
- 🔧 Working with others
- 🔧 Taking responsibility
- 🔧 Citizenship
- 🔧 Problem solving

The programme can also be used in conjunction with Youth Achievement Awards and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

Option 2

Delivered by the Youth Federation who have a mission to support and deliver quality youth work through informal education and by working in partnership with children and young people and youth organisations and other agencies.

Young people can be directly referred on to this option which will utilise youth work and informal education methods to provide tailored support programmes. These programmes engage those harder to reach young people tackling issues that are impacting on their lives, helping them re-engage in education.

Accreditation on offer in option 2:

- 🔧 OCN
- 🔧 Community Sports Leader Award
- 🔧 ASDAN Sports Certificate
- 🔧 Bronze Youth Achievement Award
- 🔧 Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- 🔧 V - (Volunteering Award)
- 🔧 Proud Award

Options 1 and 2 will also encourage the young people to become involved in activities, local democracy, influencing services for them and become actively involved within their communities.



Appendix 3 – RESPECT referral form

Office use only:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
|--|--|--|



The 'RESPECT' project is one day per week for 11 weeks. Based at the local fire station. The aim is to re-engage young people at risk via a programme of intensive, disciplined practical activities led by the Fire Service. The programme will address issues around team work, taking responsibility, consequences of actions, problem solving and lateral thinking. The programme is also designed to improve confidence and self esteem

| | | | |
|--|--------------|-----|--|
| Name of young person: | | M/F | School where Young Person is on roll: |
| Address: | | | School contact: Telephone: |
| Postcode: | | | Parent / Guardian contact: Telephone: |
| D.O.B | School Year: | | Connexions PA contact: Telephone: |
| Exclusions fixed or permanent yes / no | | | Attendance last term: |

Please comment on the following:

- Self esteem:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

- Behaviour:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

- Relationships with peers:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

- Relationships with school staff:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

- General attitude and motivation:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

- Ability to work in a group:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Is the young person involved with any other agencies?

Needs assessment:

Please highlight the estimated priority level of need in each area
(1 being lowest priority, 5 being highest priority)

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Attendance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Basic Social Skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Improvement in Self esteem | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Improvement in Behaviour Management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Improvement in Learning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| A Secure and Supportive Environment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Does the young person have issues regarding:

| | Yes/ No | Explain |
|-------------------------|---------|--|
| Violence verbal | | |
| Physical | | |
| Child Protection Issues | | To be appropriately discussed at referral meeting and not here |
| Offending Behaviour | | |
| Court Convictions | | |
| Anti-Social Behaviour | | |
| Fire Setting | | |
| Hoax Calls | | |
| Dangerous Driving | | |
| Any other comments: | | |

How do you believe the project could benefit this young person?

Does the young person have any special educational needs or a disability?

Any Additional Comments:

This space is for the young person being referred to give us their thoughts on:
(Feel free to complete this part with the young person and attach it to the back of the form)

1. What do you find difficult at school
2. Are there any areas you feel you may need extra support
3. Why would you like to join the group at RESPECT
4. Are you getting any additional support from other agencies

Please be as honest as you can and give as many details as possible. Don't worry about spelling or handwriting. This won't affect your chances of being offered a place.

Signature of young person

Date

Referrer: NAME.....POSITION.....

Signature of referrer.....Date.....

PLEASE SEND THE COMPLETED FORM TO:

Lyn Brooks-Allen
'RESPECT' School Liaison Officer
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Youth Engagement Team
Chester Fire Station
St Anne Street
Chester
CH1 2HP

Tel: 01244 342449 ext 167
Mobile: 077177 28960

Or email lyn.brooks.allen@cheshirefire.gov.uk